

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3141
GULF, COLORADO AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT BROWNWOOD, TEX., ON
NOVEMBER 8, 1947

SUMMARY

Railroad: Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe
Date: November 8, 1947
Location: Brownwood, Tex.
Kind of accident: Side collision
Equipment involved: Engine : Freight train
Train number: : Extra 3883 North
Engine numbers: 3936 : 3883
Consist: : 40 cars, caboose
Estimated speeds: Standing : 25 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable, train orders and
automatic block-signal system;
yard limits
Track: Single; tangent; 0.0143 percent
descending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 3:44 a. m.
Casualties: 4 injured
Cause: Failure properly to operate both
movements as required by this
carrier's rules governing movement
within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3141

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

GULF, COLORADO AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY

January 20, 1948

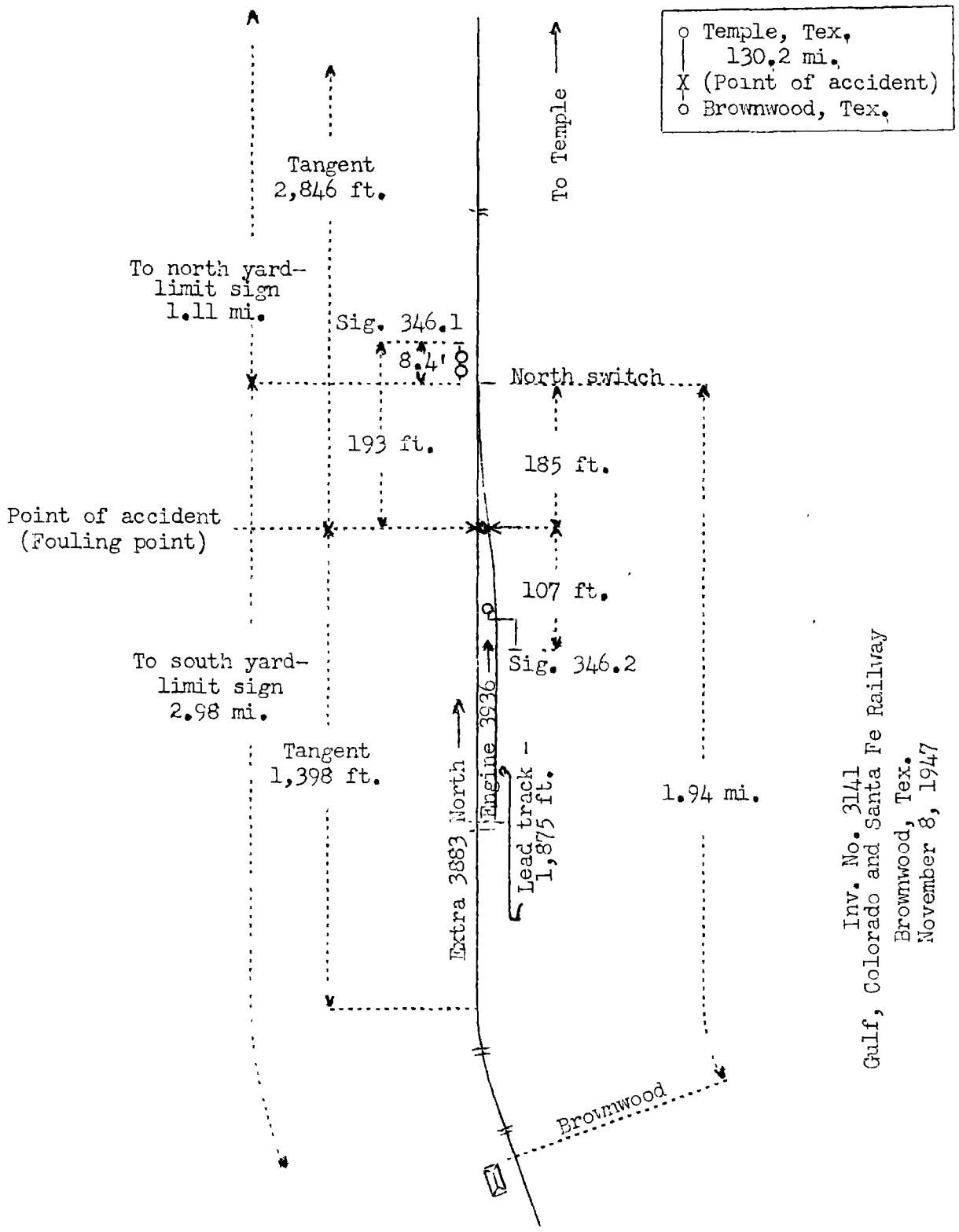
Accident at Brownwood, Tex., on November 8, 1947, caused
by failure properly to operate both movements as
required by this carrier's rules governing movement
within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On November 8, 1947, there was a side collision between
an engine and a freight train on the Gulf, Colorado and
Santa Fe Railway at Brownwood, Tex., which resulted in the
injury of four employees.

¹
Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Com-
merce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the
Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and
disposition.



Inv. No. 3141
Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway
Brownwood, Tex.
November 8, 1947

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Southern Division extending between Brownwood and Temple, Tex., 130.2 miles, a single-track line in the vicinity of the point of accident, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. Within yard limits at Brownwood, the tracks of a freight classification yard parallel the main track on the east. The north switch of a lead track 1,875 feet in length, which connects the main track and the tracks of the classification yard, is 2.98 miles north of the south yard-limit sign, 1.94 miles north of the station and 1.11 miles south of the north yard-limit sign. The accident occurred at the fouling point of the main track and the turnout of the north lead-track switch, at a point 185 feet south of the switch. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 1,398 feet immediately south of the point of accident and 2,846 feet northward. The grade is 0.0143 percent descending northward.

Automatic signal 346.2, governing north-bound movements, and automatic signal 346.1, governing south-bound movements, are, respectively, 107 feet south and 193 feet north of the point of accident. These signals are of the color-light type and are continuously lighted. The involved aspects and corresponding indications and names are as follows:

<u>Signal</u>	<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
346.2)	Green	Proceed,	Clear Signal.
)	Red	Stop--Then proceed in accordance with Rule 830.	Stop and Proceed Signal.
346.1	Red	Stop--Then proceed in accordance with Rule 830.	Stop and Proceed Signal.

The track circuit of the fouling section of the turnout of the lead-track switch extends 285 feet south of the switch.

This carrier's operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train to be reduced.

93. * * *

Within yard limits all trains and engines may use main track, not protecting against second or third class trains or extra trains, * * * All except first class trains will move within yard limits at restricted speed; the responsibility for accident with respect to second or third class or extra trains rests with the approaching train.

830. When a train is stopped by a stop and proceed signal it may:

(a) On single track, send flagman ahead immediately, wait five minutes and follow at restricted speed except that when next governing signal in advance can be plainly seen to indicate proceed and track is clear, train may at once proceed at restricted speed. Flagman need precede train only to a point where next governing signal in advance can be seen to indicate proceed and track seen to be clear.

* * *

This carrier's time-table special instructions read in part as follows:

Trains have no time table superiority at Brownwood * * * and will move * * * at restricted speed. Responsibility for accident within such limits will rest with the approaching train or engine.

25. AUTOMATIC BLOCK: On single track in automatic block territory * * * trains or engines in clear on sidings or other tracks will not foul main track until the indications of main track signals in both directions have been observed.

If signals governing moves in either or both directions display a Stop or Proceed at Restricted Speed indication, and there is no evidence of an approaching train, switch must be reversed and after waiting five minutes, train or engine may proceed, being governed by Rule 830(a).

* * *

Description of Accident

Engine 3936, headed north and en route northward from the classification yard to the main track, stopped about 3:44 a. m., with the engine fouling the main track on the turnout of the north lead-track switch. Immediately afterward the engine was struck by Extra 3883 North.

Extra 3883 North, a north-bound freight train, consisted of engine 3883, 40 cars and a caboose. This train departed from a freight classification yard, located about 1.56 miles south of the north lead-track switch, entered the main track at a point 1.42 miles north of the south yard-limit and 2.67 miles south of the north yard-limit, passed signal 346.2, which displayed stop-then-proceed, and while moving at an estimated speed of 25 miles per hour it collided with engine 3936.

Engine 3936 and the engine and the first four cars of Extra 3883 North were derailed and damaged.

The engineer and the fireman of engine 3936, and the engineer and the fireman of Extra 3883 North were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 3:44 a. m.

Discussion

About 3:44 a. m., engine 3936, headed north and en route northward from the classification yard through the north lead-track to the main track and then southward on the main track to the enginehouse at Brownwood, stopped on the turnout of the north lead-track switch, with the engine fouling the main track. Immediately afterward, engine 3936 was struck by Extra 3883 North.

The investigation disclosed that, prior to the time the movements of engine 3936 and Extra 3883 North were started from their respective locations in the yard at Brownwood, the yardmaster informed the brakeman on engine 3936 and the crew of Extra 3883 North that engine 3936 should remain clear of the main track until Extra 3883 North had cleared the north lead-track switch. The yardmaster said the information he gave these employees was for information only, and he expected that the movements would be made in accordance with the rules. The brakeman said he understood the yardmaster to say that the crew of engine 3936, which consisted of the enginemen and the brakeman, should maintain a lookout for a south-bound freight train

before engine 3936 was moved to the main track. As this engine was moving on the turnout of the north lead-track switch the enginemen were in their respective positions on the engine and the brakeman was on the right sill-step at the front of the engine. The brakeman said that he gave lantern signals for the engine to proceed slowly, but he expected the engineer to take action to stop the engine short of the clearance point. He had just left the engine and was proceeding toward the north lead-track switch when the collision occurred. The engineer said that because the brakeman was giving proceed signals he thought the way was clear and for this reason he did not take action to stop the engine short of the clearance point and to ascertain if there was any conflicting movement on the main track. Neither the brakeman nor the engineer was aware that Extra 3883 North was closely approaching until just before the collision occurred. The fireman was seriously injured and he could not be questioned during the investigation.

As Extra 3883 North was approaching the north lead-track switch the speed was about 25 miles per hour. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from their respective positions on the engine. The conductor was seated behind the fireman, the front brakeman was on the deck of the engine and the flagman was in the caboose. The members of the crew on the engine said they saw engine 3936 as it was moving northward on the lead track, but they thought the engine would stop clear of the main track in accordance with the information given them by the yardmaster. When the engine of Extra 3883 North was about 250 feet south of signal 346.2, located 292 feet south of the north lead-track switch, the engineer saw the indication of this signal change from proceed to stop-then-proceed and observed that engine 3936 was fouling the main track. Then he moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped.

The accident occurred within yard limits, and, under this carrier's rules and special instructions governing movements in this territory, before engine 3936 entered the fouling section of the turnout of the north lead-track switch the crew of this engine was required to observe automatic signal indications in both directions to ascertain that no train was closely approaching from either direction.

If a member of the crew had proceeded a few feet north of the lead-track switch he could have observed that signal 346.1 indicated that the block immediately south of this signal was occupied by a train on the main track. Extra 3883 North 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 properly to operate both movements as required by this carrier's rules governing movement within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twentieth day of January, 1948.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.