

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2888
GULF, COLORADO AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT LOMETA, TEX., ON
MAY 4, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe
Date: May 4, 1945
Location: Lometa, Tex.
Kind of accident: Side collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: Extra 1072 South : Extra 1918-3922
South
Engine numbers: 1072 : 1918-3922
Consist: 21 cars, caboose : 44 cars, caboose
Estimated speed: Standing : 20 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders;
yard limits
Track: Single; tangent; 1.24 percent
ascending grade southward
Weather: Clear
Time: 11:25 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control
speed of train moving within
yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2888

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

GULF, COLORADO AND SANTA FE RAILWAY COMPANY

June 12, 1945.

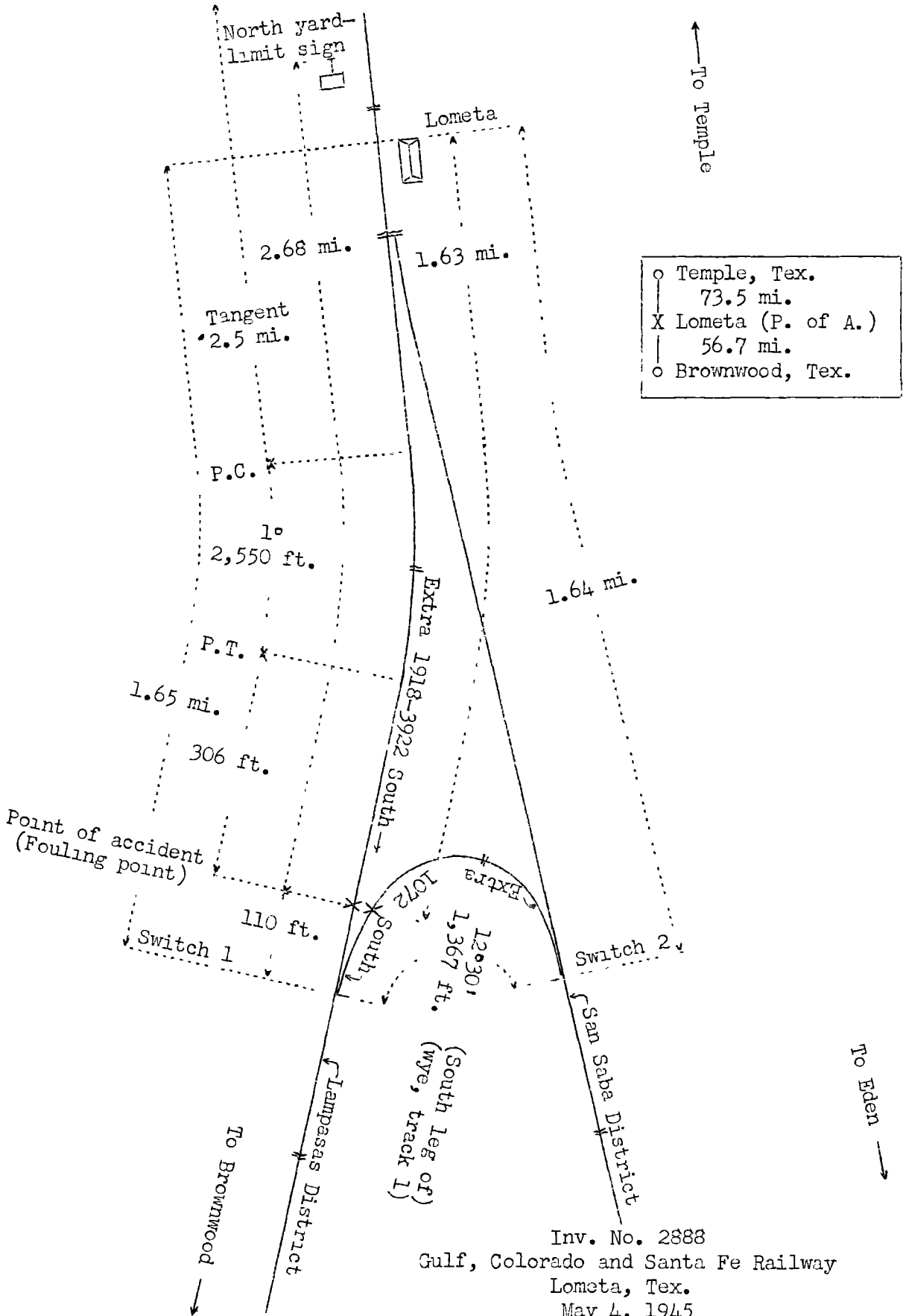
Accident at Lometa, Tex., on May 4, 1945, caused by
failure properly to control the speed of a train
moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On May 4, 1945, there was a side collision between
two freight trains on the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe
Railway at Lometa, Tex., which resulted in the death of
one employee, and the injury of three employees.

¹Under 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.



| | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|
| o | Temple, Tex. | 73.5 mi. |
| X | Lometa (P. of A.) | 56.7 mi. |
| o | Brownwood, Tex. | |

Inv. No. 2888
 Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway
 Lometa, Tex.
 May 4, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Southern Division designated as the Lampasas District and extending westward from Temple to Lometa, Texas, 73.5 miles, and thence north-westward to Brownwood, Texas, 56.7 miles, a single-track line. In the vicinity of the point of accident trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. Within yard limits at Lometa this line converges with a single-track line designated as the San Saba District and extending westward to Eden, Texas, 98 miles. According to timetable directions trains moving from Temple to Brownwood are south-bound, and trains moving from Eden to Lometa are north-bound. Hereinafter, time-table directions are used in this report. The south leg of a wye, 1,367 feet long and hereinafter referred to as track 1, connects the line of the Lampasas District and the line of the San Saba District. The switch of track 1 on the Lampasas District, hereinafter referred to as switch 1, is 1.65 miles south of the station. The switch of track 1 on the San Saba District, hereinafter referred to as switch 2, is 1.64 miles south of the station. The accident occurred 2.68 miles south of the north yard-limit sign and 1.63 miles south of the station, at the fouling point of the Lampasas District main track and the turnout of switch 1. From the north on the Lampasas District the main track is tangent throughout a distance of about 2.5 miles, then there is a 1° curve to the right 2,550 feet, which is followed by a tangent 306 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance southward. For movements from the San Saba District to the Lampasas District on track 1 the curvature is 12°30' to the left. On the Lampasas District the grade for south-bound trains is 1.20 percent descending 1,700 feet, then there is a vertical curve 1,000 feet, which is followed by a 1.24 percent ascending grade 1,150 feet to the point of accident and 850 feet southward.

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, but will give way as soon as possible upon their approach. 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.

Description of Accident

Extra 1072 South, a south-bound freight train, consisted of engine 1072, 21 cars and a caboose. This train stalled while it was moving on track 1, en route from the San Saba District to the Lampasas District, and stopped about 11:23 p. m., with the front end of the engine standing on the turnout of switch 1 about 70 feet north of the switch. About 2 minutes later the engine was struck by Extra 1918-3922 South.

Extra 1918-3922 South, a south-bound freight train en route from Temple to Brownwood, consisted of engines 1918 and 3922, 44 cars and a caboose, in the order named. This train passed the north yard-limit sign at Lometa, stopped in the vicinity of the station, and departed at 11:15 p. m. About 10 minutes later, while this train was moving at an estimated speed of 20 miles per hour it struck Extra 1072 South.

The engine and the first two cars of Extra 1072, and both engines and the first six cars of Extra 1918-3922 were derailed and damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 11:25 p. m.

The engineer of the first engine of Extra 1918-3922 was killed. The fireman of Extra 1072, and the fireman of the first engine and the front brakeman of Extra 1918-3922 were injured.

Discussion

Prior to the accident the train dispatcher issued a message instructing the crew of each train that Extra 1918-3922 was to follow Extra 1072 from Lometa. About 10:50 p. m. the operator observed that engine 1072 was moving southward on the San Saba District from the vicinity of the station after the engine had been supplied with water, and, although the movement of this train was not visible from the vicinity of the station, he thought Extra 1072 had departed soon afterward. About 11:10 p. m., the operator informed the crew of Extra 1918-3922 that Extra 1072 had departed about 10:55 p. m. However, the investigation disclosed that Extra 1072 had stalled on track 1 when it was preparing to enter the Lampasas District main track at switch 1, and the engine fouled the main track. The members of the crew of Extra 1072 were not aware that Extra 1918-3922 was approaching until the engineer saw the reflection of the headlight immediately prior to the collision.

As Extra 1918-3922 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the engineers were maintaining a lookout

ahead. The train-brake system was in the charge of the engineer of the first engine. The brakes had been tested and had functioned properly at all points where used en route. The fireman of the first engine said he was not aware that engine 1072 was occupying the turnout of switch 1 until his engine was about 400 feet north of the switch. Then he called a warning to his engineer, who immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but it was then too late to avert the collision. The engineer of the first engine was killed. The other members of the crew were not aware of anything wrong until the brakes were applied in emergency.

This accident occurred within yard limits, and Extra 1913-3022 was moving at a speed of about 20 miles per hour when the collision occurred. Under the rules, the speed of this train within yard limits was required to be so controlled 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 control the speed of a train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twelfth day of June, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.