

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2819

THE JAMESTOWN, WESTFIELD & NORTHWESTERN
RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR BONITA, N. Y., ON

AUGUST 26, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Jamestown, Westfield & Northwestern
Date: August 26, 1944
Location: Bonita, N. Y.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Passenger : Passenger
Train numbers: 4 : 3
Engine numbers: Electric motor 304 : Electric motor
302
Consist: Motor-car : Motor-car
Estimated speed: 35 m. p. h. : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; 4°16' curve; 0.42 percent
ascending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 11:01 a. m.
Casualties: 2 killed; 61 injured
Cause: Failure to obey meet order
Recommendation: That the Jamestown, Westfield &
Northwestern Railroad Company
establish an adequate block
system on its line

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2819

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

THE JAMESTOWN, WESTFIELD & NORTHWESTERN
RAILROAD COMPANY

September 30, 1944.

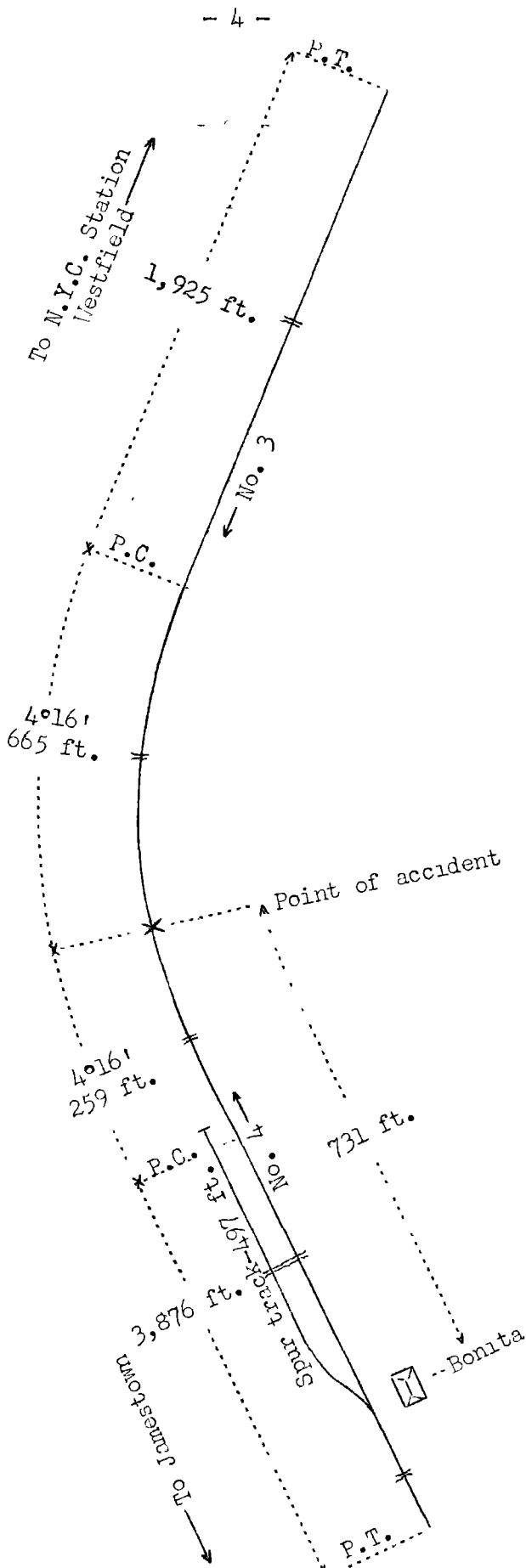
Accident near Bonita, N. Y., on August 26, 1944, caused
by failure to obey a meet order.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On August 26, 1944, there was a head-end collision between two passenger trains on the Jamestown, Westfield & Northwestern Railroad near Bonita, N. Y., which resulted in the death of 1 passenger and 1 train-service employee, and the injury of 58 passengers, 1 employee not on duty and 2 train-service employees.

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



	N.Y.C. Station,
o	Westfield, N. Y.
	21.7 mi.
o	Bemus Point
	7.4 mi.
X	Bonita (P. of A.)
	3.1 mi.
o	Jamestown, N. Y.

Inv-2819
 Jamestown, Westfield & Northwestern Railroad
 Bonita, N. Y.
 August 26, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

The Jamestown, Westfield & Northwestern Railroad was a single-track line, equipped with an overhead trolley system for the electric propulsion of trains, and extending northward from Jamestown to N. Y. C. Station, Westfield, N. Y., 32.2 miles. Trains were operated over this line by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. At Bonita, 3.1 miles north of Jamestown, a spur track 497 feet long paralleled the main track on the west. The switch of the spur track was opposite the station and was facing-point for north-bound movements. The accident occurred on the main track 731 feet north of the spur-track switch. From the south there was a tangent 3,876 feet in length, which was followed by a 4°16' curve to the right 259 feet to the point of accident and 665 feet beyond. From the north there was a tangent 1,925 feet in length, which was followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade for north-bound trains was 0.42 percent ascending.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

14. ENGINE AND MOTOR WHISTLE SIGNALS

NOTE--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "O" for short sounds; "___" for longer sounds. * * *

SOUND INDICATION

* * *

(n) ___ ___ O Approaching meeting points. See Rule 90a.

88a. At meeting points between trains of the same class, the train in the direction specified on the time-table must take siding unless otherwise provided.

90. All trains must approach meeting and passing points under full control and stop unless the train to be met or passed is clear of the main track and the switches and signals are seen to be right and the track is clear.

* * *

Trains must stop clear of the switch used by the train to be met in going on siding.

90a. The motorman will given signal 14 (n) at least 1500 feet before reaching a schedule meeting point, or a point where by train order the train is to meet or wait for an opposing train. Should the motorman fail to give signal 14 (n) as herein prescribed, the conductor must take immediate action to stop train.

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS

* * *

NOTE 2.--Where "motor" is specified in the following examples train dispatcher may use "car" or "engine."

A.

Fixing Meeting Points for Opposing Trains

(1.) No. 1 Motor 303 meet No. 2 Motor 302 at B.
* * *

* * *

Trains receiving these orders will run with respect to each other to the designated points and there meet in the manner prescribed by the Rules.

Time-table special instructions read in part as follows:

8. (88) SUPERIORITY OF TRAINS.

All regular trains and trains holding train order meets have equal authority to scheduled or train order meeting point unless changed by train order.

(a) At meeting points, northward trains are superior to southward trains of the same class and will hold the main track unless otherwise ordered by * * * Dispatcher.

(b) Inferior trains will take siding unless otherwise ordered by Dispatcher. If unable to take siding, inferior trains must protect against superior trains.

No maximum authorized speed for passenger trains was specified by rule or by special instruction.

Description of Accident

No. 4, a north-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of electric-motor passenger-car 304. At Jamestown, the last open office, the crew of this train received copies of train order No. 4 reading as follows:

No. 3 Car 302 Meet No. 4
Car 304 at Bonita

No. 4 departed from Jamestown at 10:56 a. m., 1 minute late, passed the spur-track switch at Bonita, where it was required to wait unless No. 3 was into clear, and while moving at an estimated speed of 35 miles per hour it collided with No. 3 at a point 731 feet north of the spur-track switch.

No. 3, a south-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of electric-motor passenger-car No. 302. At Bemus Point, 7.4 miles north of Bonita and the last open office, the crew received copies of train order No. 4. No. 3 departed from Bemus Point at 10:46 a. m., 17 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it collided with No. 4.

The force of the impact moved No. 3 northward about 45 feet. The equipment of both trains was derailed, and stopped upright and in line with the track. The front end of motor-car 302 was crushed inward 20 feet, and the front end of motor-car 304 was crushed inward 13 feet. The fatalities and most of the injuries occurred in motor-car 304.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 11:01 a. m.

The motorman of No. 4 was killed. The conductor of each train was injured.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 17.33 trains.

The equipment of each train was built in 1914. Each car was of conventional steel, plate, girder, side-post, end-sill and side-sill construction, 62 feet 2 inches in length, weighed 50,000 pounds, and was divided into a passenger compartment and a baggage compartment. Car 302 had seating capacity for 44 persons and car 304 for 54 persons. Each car was powered by four 65-horsepower electric motors, and was provided with automatic and straight air controlled by an M22 brake valve.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that at meeting points the superior train must stop clear of the switch to be used by the inferior train to enter the siding. The motorman of each train must sound the meeting-point whistle signal not less than 1,500 feet before the train reaches a meeting point. If a motorman fails to sound the proper signal, the conductor must take immediate action to stop the train. In addition,

the train holding the main track must approach meeting points under such control that it can be stopped short of the clearance point, and must not pass the clearance point unless the train to be met is into clear and the switches are properly lined.

The crew of each train consisted of a conductor and a motorman. The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 4, which established Bonita as the meeting point between No. 4, a north-bound first-class train, and No. 3, a south-bound first-class train. No. 4 was superior by direction and was required to stop clear of the spur-track switch at Bonita unless No. 3 was into clear on the spur track.

As No. 3 was approaching Bonita the speed was about 15 miles per hour. The motorman's view of the track ahead was restricted because of buildings and vegetation adjacent to the track on the curve. When the motor-car reached a point about 125 feet north of the point where the accident occurred the motorman saw the approaching train, and he immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 3 was about 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

About 10 minutes before the accident occurred, the crew of No. 4 received copies of train order No. 4 at Jamestown, 3.1 miles south of Bonita. The conductor delivered a copy of the order to the motorman, and he said that the motorman understood the requirements of the order. As No. 4 was approaching Bonita the speed was about 55 miles per hour. The conductor was in the rear end of the passenger compartment. The motorman did not sound the meeting-point signal or take action to reduce the speed. When the motor-car was in the vicinity of the spur-track switch the conductor opened the emergency valve, but this action was not taken soon enough to prevent the accident. The speed of No. 4 was about 35 miles per hour when the collision occurred. It could not be determined why the motorman of No. 4 failed to comply with the provisions of train order No. 4, as he was killed in the accident. The brakes had been tested and had functioned properly. There was no condition found that would prevent the proper application of the train brakes.

On the line of this carrier trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. If an adequate block system had been in use, these opposing trains would not have been permitted to occupy the same block simultaneously, and this accident would not have occurred.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey a meet order.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Jamestown, Westfield & Northwestern Railroad Company establish an adequate block system on its line.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this thirtieth day of September, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.