

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2788
THE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR HORNBICK, LA., ON
APRIL 6, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Kansas City Southern
Date: April 6, 1944
Location: Hornbeck, La.
Kind of accident: Derailment
Train involved: Freight
Train number: Second 92
Engine number: 750
Consist: 1 auxiliary water car, 68 cars,
3 cabooses
Estimated speed: 25 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; 3° curve; level
Weather: Clear
Time: 5:45 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 2 injured
Cause: Obstruction on rail

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2788

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

THE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

May 1, 1944.

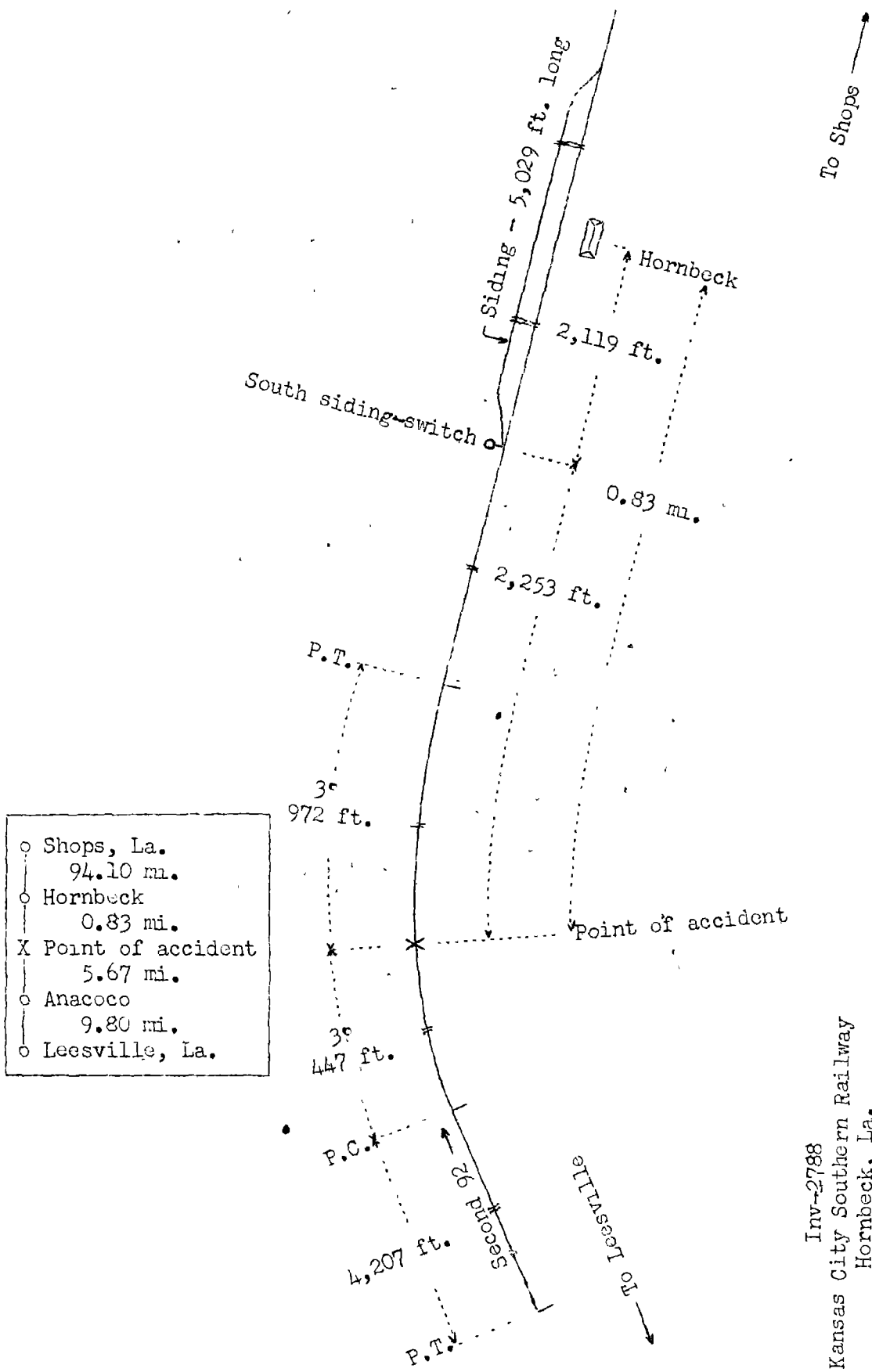
Accident near Hornbeck, La., on April 6, 1944, caused by
an obstruction on rail.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On April 6, 1944, there was a derailment of a freight train on the Kansas City Southern Railway near Hornbeck, La., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of two 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.



- o Shops, La.
94.10 mi.
- o Hornbeck
0.83 mi.
- X Point of accident
5.67 mi.
- o Anacoco
9.80 mi.
- o Leesville, La.

Inv-2788
 Kansas City Southern Railway
 Hornbeck, La.
 April 6, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Southern Division designated as the Sixth District and extending northward from Leesville to Shops, La., 110.4 miles. This was a single-track line over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. The accident occurred 15.47 miles north of Leesville, at a point 0.83 mile south of the station at Hornbeck. From the south there was a tangent 4,207 feet in length, which was followed by a 3° curve to the right 447 feet to the point of accident and 972 feet beyond. The grade for north-bound trains varied between 0.20 and 0.375 percent ascending throughout a distance of 2,900 feet, then it was level 668 feet to the point of accident and 1,332 feet beyond.

The track structure consisted of 100-pound rail, 39 feet in length, on 22 ties to the rail length. It was single-spiked, fully tieplated, provided with 6 rail anchors per rail length, and was ballasted with gravel to a depth of 12 inches. The south switch of a siding 5,029 feet long, which paralleled the main track on the west, was 2,119 feet south of the station at Hornbeck. Entry to the siding at the south switch was made through a No. 12 turnout.

Rules and instructions of the maintenance-of-way department read in part as follows:

428. * * * Scrap spikes and bolts must be picked up and taken to scrap bin daily.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains was 35 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Second 92, a north-bound second-class freight train, consisting of engine 750, of the 2-8-8-0 type, 1 auxiliary water car, 2 cabooses, 68 cars and a caboose, in the order named, passed Anacoco, 6.5 miles south of Hornbeck and the last open office, at 5:28 p. m., 2 hours 28 minutes late. While this train was moving at an estimated speed of 25 miles per hour the engine and the first 7 cars were derailed.

The engine-truck wheels were derailed to the left at a point 2,253 feet south of the south siding-switch and continued in line with the track 2,337 feet to the frog of the switch, where the general derailment occurred. The engine and its tender, remaining coupled, stopped upright and in line with

the main track, with the front end of the engine 258 feet north of the south siding-switch. The first 7 cars stopped in various positions. The engine and the first 6 cars were damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 5:45 p. m.

The engineer was killed, and the fireman and the front brakeman were injured.

Discussion

Second 92 was moving on a 3° curve to the right at an estimated speed of 25 miles per hour, in territory where the maximum authorized speed was 35 miles per hour, when the engine-truck wheels became derailed. There was no defective condition of the engine prior to the accident, and there was no indication of dragging equipment or defective track.

As the train was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The air brakes had functioned properly en route, and the engine had been riding smoothly. The fireman said that when the engine reached a point about 400 feet south of the north end of the curve the engineer appeared to be concerned about some condition at the front of the engine. The fireman crossed to the right side of the engine and looked forward from the gangway, but did not see anything wrong and he returned to the left side of the engine. Soon afterward the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, then the general derailment occurred. It could not be determined when the engineer became aware of anything being wrong, as he was killed in the accident.

Examination of the track disclosed flange marks on the ties outside the high rail and inside the low rail of the curve beginning at a point 972 feet south of the north end of the curve and extending northward 2,337 feet to the frog of the south siding-switch. From this point northward the track was torn up to the point where the engine stopped. About 10 feet south of the point where the flange marks appeared on the ties, a track spike was found on the ballast about 2 inches outside the base of the high rail. The hook of the spike head was depressed downward against the shank, and the back of the head and shank bore newly made abrasive marks. Immediately south of the point where the track spike was found, an abrasive mark appeared on top of the head of the high rail. It extended diagonally from the center of the head to the outside and was about 3 feet long. These marks indicated that prior to the accident the spike had been placed in a longitudinal position on top of the head of the high rail with the head to the south

and the hook upward. The spike caused the left engine-truck wheel to be raised high enough for its flange to cross the head of the high rail.

There was no direct evidence introduced as to who had placed the spike on the rail, but some of the witnesses were of the opinion that it had been placed by a child who was seen in the vicinity a short time prior to the occurrence of the accident. The investigation disclosed that a considerable quantity of scrap track-fastenings had been on the right-of-way in the vicinity of the point where the accident occurred during a period of about 2 months prior to the occurrence of the accident. The track had been repaired by an extra gang, and the scrap material lay along the track from the time the repairs were made to the time of the accident. The rules of the maintenance-of-way department of this carrier provide that track material must be collected daily by track forces. The section foreman understood the requirements of the rules, but said his force had been engaged in other important duties and had not been able to devote time to picking up track material in this vicinity. The roadmaster said he had made frequent trips over this territory, but had not observed the presence of the track fastenings.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by an obstruction on the rail.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this first day of May, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.