

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2834  
THE LEHIGH AND NEW ENGLAND RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR GLENWOOD JUNCTION, N. Y., ON  
SEPTEMBER 30, 1944

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Lenigh and New England  
Date: September 30, 1944  
Location: Glenwood Junction, N. Y.  
Kind of accident: Head-end collision  
Equipment involved: Freight train : Track motor-car  
Train number: Extra 305 West :  
Engine number: 305 :  
Consist: 28 cars, caboose : Motor-car 567  
Estimated speed: 20 m. p. h. : Unknown  
Operation: Train orders  
Track: Single; tangent; 0.09 percent  
descending grade westward  
Weather: Foggy  
Time: 7:30 a. m.  
Casualties: 3 killed  
Cause: Failure of the Lenigh and New  
England Railroad Company to  
enforce its regulations  
governing operation of track  
motor-cars

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2834

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

THE LEHIGH AND NEW ENGLAND RAILROAD COMPANY

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November 10, 1944.

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Accident near Glenwood Junction, N. Y., on September 30,  
1944, caused by failure of the Lehigh and New England  
Railroad Company to enforce its regulations governing  
the operation of track motor-cars.

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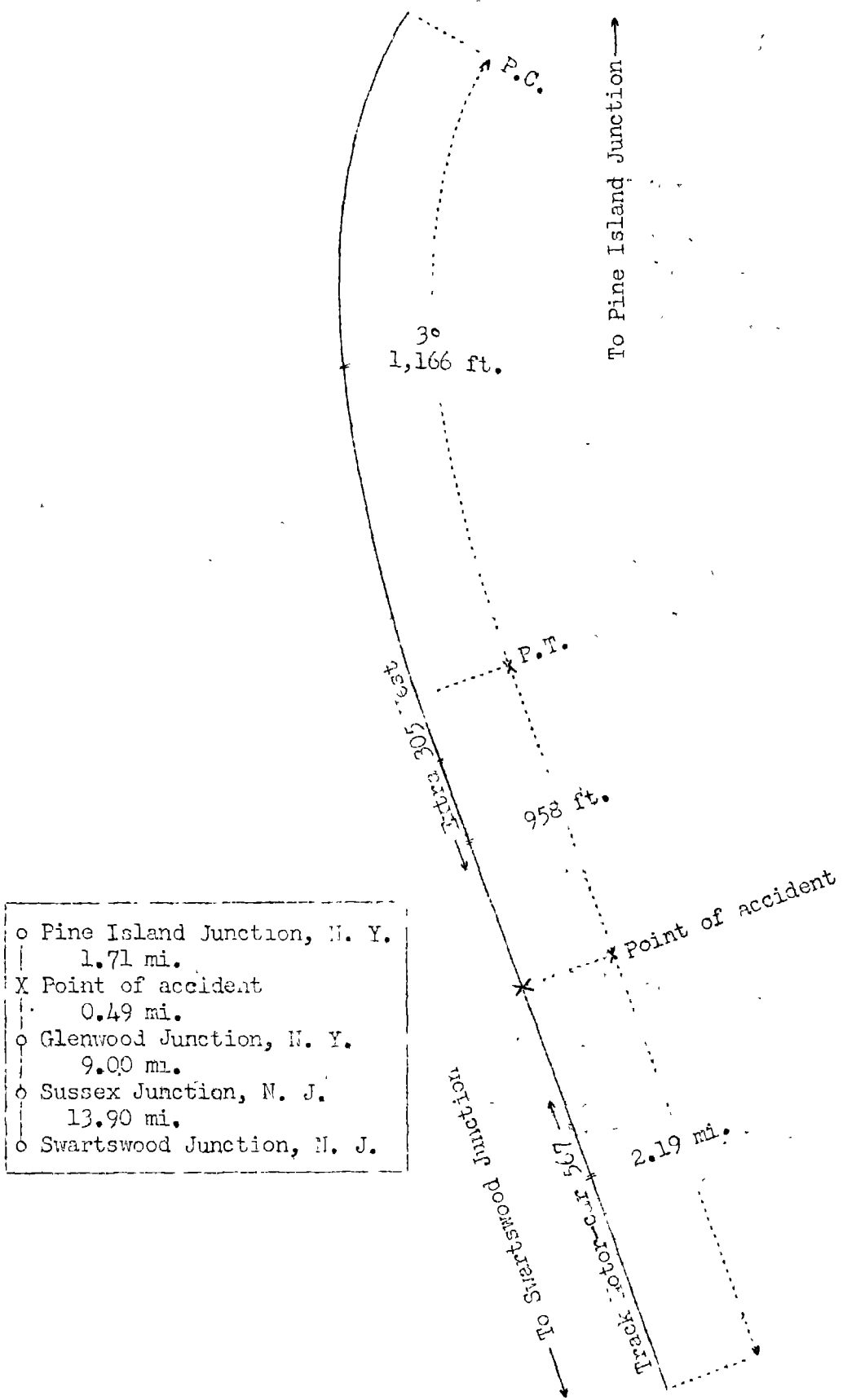
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On September 30, 1944, there was a head-end collision  
between a freight train and a track motor-car on the Lehigh  
and New England Railroad near Glenwood Junction, N. Y.,  
which resulted in the death of three employees.

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<sup>1</sup>Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Com-  
merce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the  
Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and dis-  
position.



- o Pine Island Junction, N. Y.  
1.71 mi.
- X Point of accident  
0.49 mi.
- o Glenwood Junction, N. Y.  
9.00 mi.
- o Sussex Junction, N. J.  
13.90 mi.
- o Swartswood Junction, N. J.

Inv-2834  
 Lehigh and New England Railroad  
 Glenwood Junction, N. Y.  
 September 30, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the railroad extending westward from Pine Island Junction, N. Y., to Swartswood Junction, N. J., 25.1 miles. This was a single-track line over which trains were operated by train orders only. There were no time-table schedules in effect, and there was no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track 1.71 miles west of Pine Island Junction, at a point 0.49 mile east of the station at Glenwood Junction. From the east there was a 3° curve to the left 1,166 feet in length, which was followed by a tangent 958 feet to the point of accident and 2.19 miles beyond. The grade for west-bound trains was, successively, 0.275 percent descending 700 feet, 0.13 percent ascending 1,150 feet and 0.09 percent descending 93 feet to the point of accident and 557 feet beyond.

Instructions issued July 27, 1921, and reissued August 1, 1944, to section foremen read in part as follows:

5. They must be thoroughly familiar with the current time-table, and rules and regulations governing the Operating Department.

15. Extra and special trains may be run at any time and trains may run on any track in either direction without notice, except to those whom it is necessary to advise in order to insure proper movement of such trains. Foremen and their sectionmen must be governed accordingly and exercise proper care to avoid being injured.

19. \* \* \*. Self-propelled cars will be numbered for identification and will be operated only when in charge of a competent employe qualified to handle train orders issued by proper authority.

20. \* \* \* self-propelled cars shall be operated with one man facing in each direction when practicable. A speed of twenty (20) miles per hour shall not be exceeded. \* \* \*.

Instructions issued October 2, 1937, relating to the operation of track motor-cars, read in part as follows:

\* \* \* arrange effective at once to issue train orders to all motor cars as all the Maintenance of Way employes operating motor cars are qualified to take train orders.

In getting in contact with your Foremen, you will ascertain if they have train order books and instruct them to arrange to run under orders whenever possible.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains was 45 miles per hour.

#### Description of Accident

Extra 305 West, a west-bound freight train, consisting of engine 305, 28 cars and a caboose, departed from Pine Island Junction about 7:25 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 20 miles per hour it collided with track motor-car 567.

Track motor-car 567 departed east-bound from Sussex Junction, 9 miles west of Glenwood Junction, about 7 a. m., passed Glenwood Junction and while moving at an unknown speed it collided with Extra 305 West.

Motor-car 567 was badly damaged. The front end of engine 305 was slightly damaged.

There was a dense fog at the time of the accident, which occurred about 7:30 a. m.

The employees killed were members of a track force.

#### Discussion

The regulations governing the movement of track motor-cars on this line provided that whenever possible the movement of these cars on a main track must be governed by train-order authority.

At 6:35 a. m., about 55 minutes prior to the time the accident occurred, the foreman of the track force communicated by telephone with the train dispatcher to inform the dispatcher that motor-car 567 was to proceed from Sussex Junction to Pine Island Junction and to obtain information regarding train movements in that territory. The train dispatcher informed the foreman that Extra 305 West was proceeding toward Sussex Junction, and that it had departed from a station 20 miles east of Pine Island Junction at 6:30 a. m. The foreman made no request for train orders to be issued to authorize the movement of the motor-car, and the dispatcher issued no train order. Motor-car 567, occupied by the foreman and two laborers, departed from Sussex Junction about 7 a. m., and had proceeded eastward a distance of 9.5 miles when it collided with Extra 305 West. The occupants of the motor-car were killed. Because of dense fog

in the vicinity of the point where the accident occurred, visibility was restricted to such an extent that the members of the crew on the engine of Extra 305 did not see the motor-car before it was struck.

The investigation disclosed that it had been a long-standing practice for motor-cars to be operated on the main track without train-order authority. The superintendent, the chief train dispatcher and the train dispatcher said they understood that unless a specific request was made for train-order authority to operate a motor-car on the main track, no train order was required to be issued. In this case the movement of the motor-car was made on the basis of a telephone conversation between the train dispatcher and the section foreman. However, the prescribed regulations required that the movement be made by train-order authority. If the movement had been made by train-order authority, under the conditions present the motor-car would not have been permitted to leave Sussex Junction until Extra 305 had reached that station, and this accident would have been averted.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure of the Lehigh and New England Railroad Company to enforce its regulations governing the operation of track motor-cars.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this tenth day of November, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.