

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3305
LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY
IN RE ACCIDENT
AT MT. PLEASANT, TENN., ON
JANUARY 17, 1950

SUMMARY

Date: January 17, 1950

Railroad: Louisville and Nashville

Location: Mt. Pleasant, Tenn.

Kind of accident: Side collision

Equipment involved: Freight train : Engine with cars

Train number: Extra 1803 South :

Engine numbers: 1803 : 1254

Consists: 27 cars, cabooses : 11 cars

Estimated speeds: 5 m. p. h. : 5 m. p. h.

Operation: Rules governing movements on yard tracks

Track: Yard track; tangent; 0.52 percent descending grade southward

Weather: Raining

Time: 10:45 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 2 injured

Cause: Failure properly to control switching movement

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3305

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

LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY

March 7, 1950

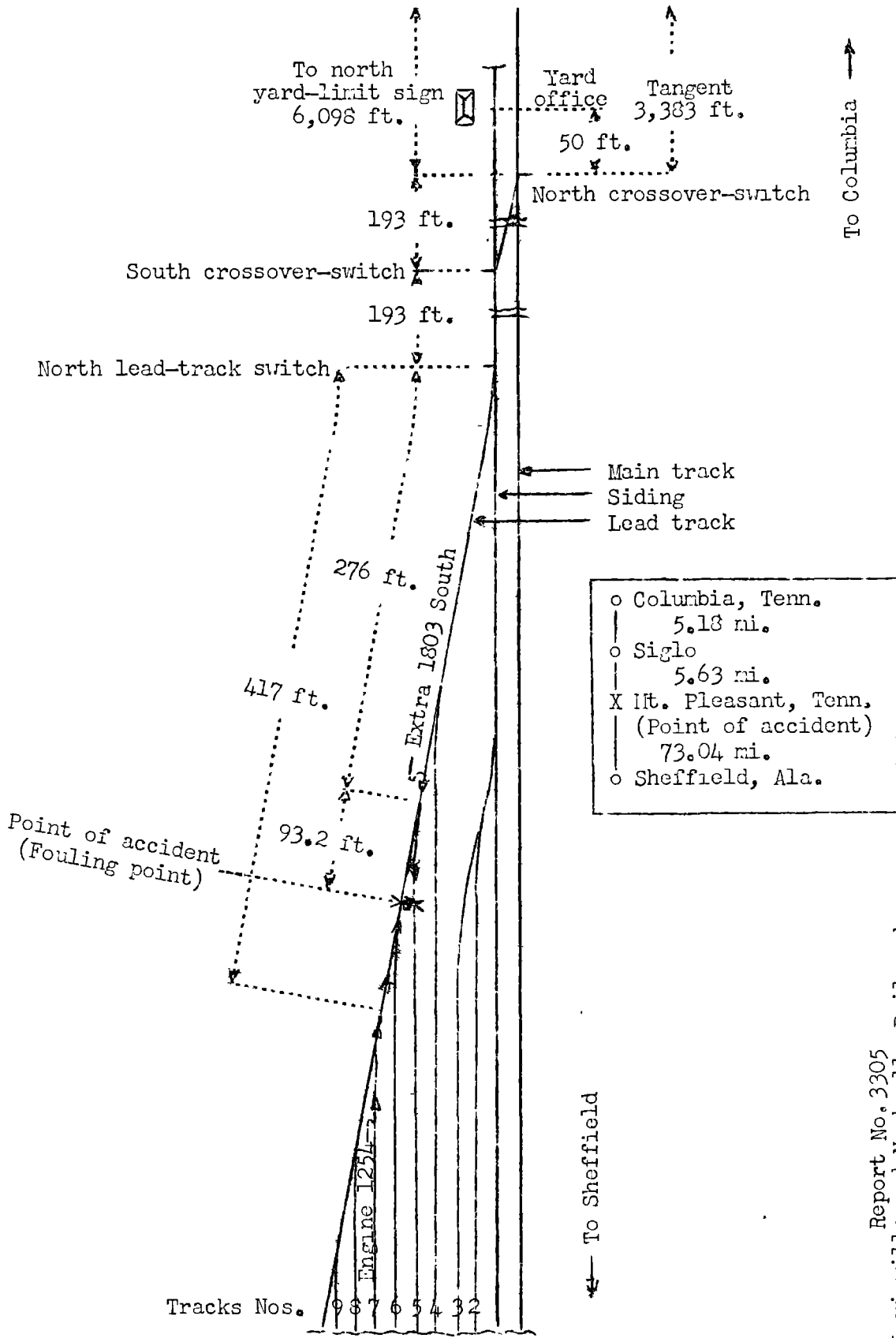
Accident at Mt. Pleasant, Tenn., on January 17, 1950,
caused by failure properly to control a switching
movement.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 17, 1950, there was a side collision between a freight train and an engine with cars on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad at Mt. Pleasant, Tenn., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of two employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Railroad and Public Utilities Commission of Tennessee.

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



Report No. 3305
 Louisville and Nashville Railroad
 Mt. Pleasant, Tenn.
 January 17, 1950

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Birmingham Division extending between Columbia, Tenn., and Sheffield, Ala., 83.85 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. Within yard limits at Mt. Pleasant, 10.81 miles south of Columbia, a siding and eight yard tracks parallel the main track on the west. The yard tracks are designated from east to west consecutively as tracks No. 2 to No. 9. A crossover 193 feet in length connects the main track with the siding. The north switch of this crossover, which is facing-point for south-bound movements on the main track, is located 6,098 feet south of the north yard-limit sign and about 50 feet south of the yard office. At a point 193 feet south of the south crossover-switch a lead track diverges from the siding and connects with the north ends of tracks Nos. 4 to 9, inclusive. The north switches of tracks Nos. 5 and 7 are, respectively, 276 feet and 417 feet south of the north lead-track switch. The accident occurred 93.2 feet south of the north switch of track No. 5, at the fouling point of the lead track and track No. 5. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 3,383 feet immediately north of the crossover and a considerable distance southward. The turnouts at the north ends of the yard tracks are provided with No. 8 frogs, and have a curvature of $11^{\circ}12'$. The grade is 0.52 percent descending southward at the point of accident.

The switch stands at the north switches of tracks Nos. 5 and 7 are of the ground-throw, low-stand type, and are located 6 feet 2 inches west of the center-line of the lead track. They are equipped with disc targets and oil-burning lamps. The targets are 10 inches in diameter and are fitted around the lenses of the lamps, which are 4 inches in diameter. The centers of the lenses are $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the level of the tops of the rails. The lamp and the target of each switch stand displays a green aspect when the switch is lined for movement on the lead track, and displays a yellow aspect when the switch is lined for entry to a yard track.

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

DEFINITIONS.

Yard.--A system of tracks within defined limits provided for the making up of trains, storing of cars and other purposes, over which movements not authorized by time-table, or by train order, may be made, subject to prescribed signals and rules, or special instructions.

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train to be reduced, but not exceeding 15 miles per hour.

164. Restricted speed must be observed by trains and engines when using side tracks and defined yard tracks.

Description of Accident

Extra 1803 South, a south-bound freight train, consisted of engine 1803, 27 cars and a caboose. This train departed from Siglo, the last open office, 5.63 miles north of Mt. Pleasant, at 10:15 a. m., and stopped on the main track at the north crossover-switch at Mt. Pleasant at 10:38 a. m. Several minutes later it moved through the crossover and entered the lead track. The engine was headed northward and was in backward motion. While the engine was moving through the turnout from the lead track to track No. 5 at a speed of about 5 miles per hour, the west side of the engine was struck by the tender of engine 1254.

Engine 1254, headed southward and pulling 11 cars, entered the lead track from track No. 7. While it was moving northward on the lead track at a speed of about 5 miles per hour, the tender of the engine struck the side of engine 1803 at the fouling point of the lead track and track No. 5.

Extra 1803 South stopped with the south end of the tender on track No. 5 and 244 feet south of the point of accident. The cab of the engine was demolished. Engine 1254 was moved southward by the force of the impact and stopped on track No. 7 with the north end of the tender 66 feet south of the point of accident. The north truck of the tender was derailed. The left rear corner of the cistern was crushed.

The fireman of Extra 1803 South was killed. The engineer of Extra 1803 South and the engineer of engine 1254 were injured.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 10:45 a. m.

Discussion

When Extra 1803 South stopped at Mt. Pleasant the engineer, the fireman and the front brakeman were on the engine and the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The front brakeman alighted from the engine, and, after receiving instructions from the yard master to yard his train on track No. 5, he lined the crossover switches for movement through the crossover, and gave a proceed signal. He then proceeded southward on the lead track and lined the north switch of track No. 5 for movement from the lead track to track No. 5. When he was in the vicinity of this switch he observed the rear end of an engine which was standing a short distance south of the clearance point on track No. 7. Cars on track No. 6 obstructed his view of the front of the engine and of the members of its crew. The engine was not in motion at the time he lined the switch. He then proceeded northward along the lead track and boarded the engine of Extra 1803 South at a point between tracks Nos. 4 and 5. He was standing on the deck of the engine when the collision occurred. After the engine of Extra 1803 South moved through the crossover, the tender of the engine obstructed the engineer's view of the lead track until the engine entered that track. The engineer then observed that the lead track between his engine and the north switch of track No. 5 was clear and that track No. 5 was clear. When the tender entered the turnout to track No. 5, his view of the lead track was again obstructed, and he was unaware of the approach of engine 1254 until the collision occurred. As the engine entered the lead track, the fireman was in his usual position on the left side of the cab. The front brakeman said that when he boarded the engine between tracks Nos. 4 and 5, the fireman was maintaining a lookout in the direction of movement. Since the fireman did not warn the other employees on the engine of the approach of engine 1254, he apparently was not aware of its approach until the collision occurred.

About 15 minutes before the accident occurred engine 1254 departed from the vicinity of the yard office, then proceeded southward on the lead track, and entered track No. 7 at the north switch. This switch was left lined for entry to track No. 7. The engine was coupled to 11 cars on track No. 7, and a member of the train crew then gave a signal to proceed northward. At this time the rear of the tender of the engine was about 50 feet south of the clearance point on track No. 7. The members of the train crew were west of track No. 7 and south of the engine. From this location they could not obtain a view of the lead track north of their engine. The fireman's view of the lead track was obstructed by the cars which were standing on track No. 6. When the north-bound movement was started, the fireman observed that the switch at the north end of track No. 7 was lined properly. He then became engaged in tending the fire and did not again look in the direction of movement until the collision occurred. The tender of the engine obstructed the engineer's view of the lead track until after the engine had passed through the turnout of track No. 7. He first observed the engine of Extra 1803 South when it was a short distance from the tender of his engine. He immediately initiated a brake application, but the collision occurred before the speed of the engine had been materially reduced.

Under the rules of the carrier, the speed of engine 1254 was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped short of an obstruction.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control a switching movement.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this seventh day of March, 1950.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.