

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 3128  
THE MINNEAPOLIS & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT MORNING SUN, IOWA, ON  
SEPTEMBER 20, 1947

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Minneapolis & St. Louis

Date: September 20, 1947

Location: Morning Sun, Iowa

Kind of accident: Rear-end collision

Trains involved: Freight : Freight

Train numbers: 10 : Extra 610-627 East

Engine numbers: Diesel-electric : 610-627  
246

Consists: 22 cars, caboose : 40 cars, caboose

Estimated speeds: Standing : 15 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders;  
yard limits

Track: Single; tangent; 1.21 percent  
descending grade eastward

Weather: Cloudy

Time: 5:10 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 4 injured

Cause: Failure properly to control speed  
of following train moving within  
yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 3128

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

THE MINNEAPOLIS & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY COMPANY

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October 30, 1947

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Accident at Morning Sun, Iowa, on September 20, 1947,  
caused by failure properly to control the speed  
of the following train moving within yard limits.

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

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

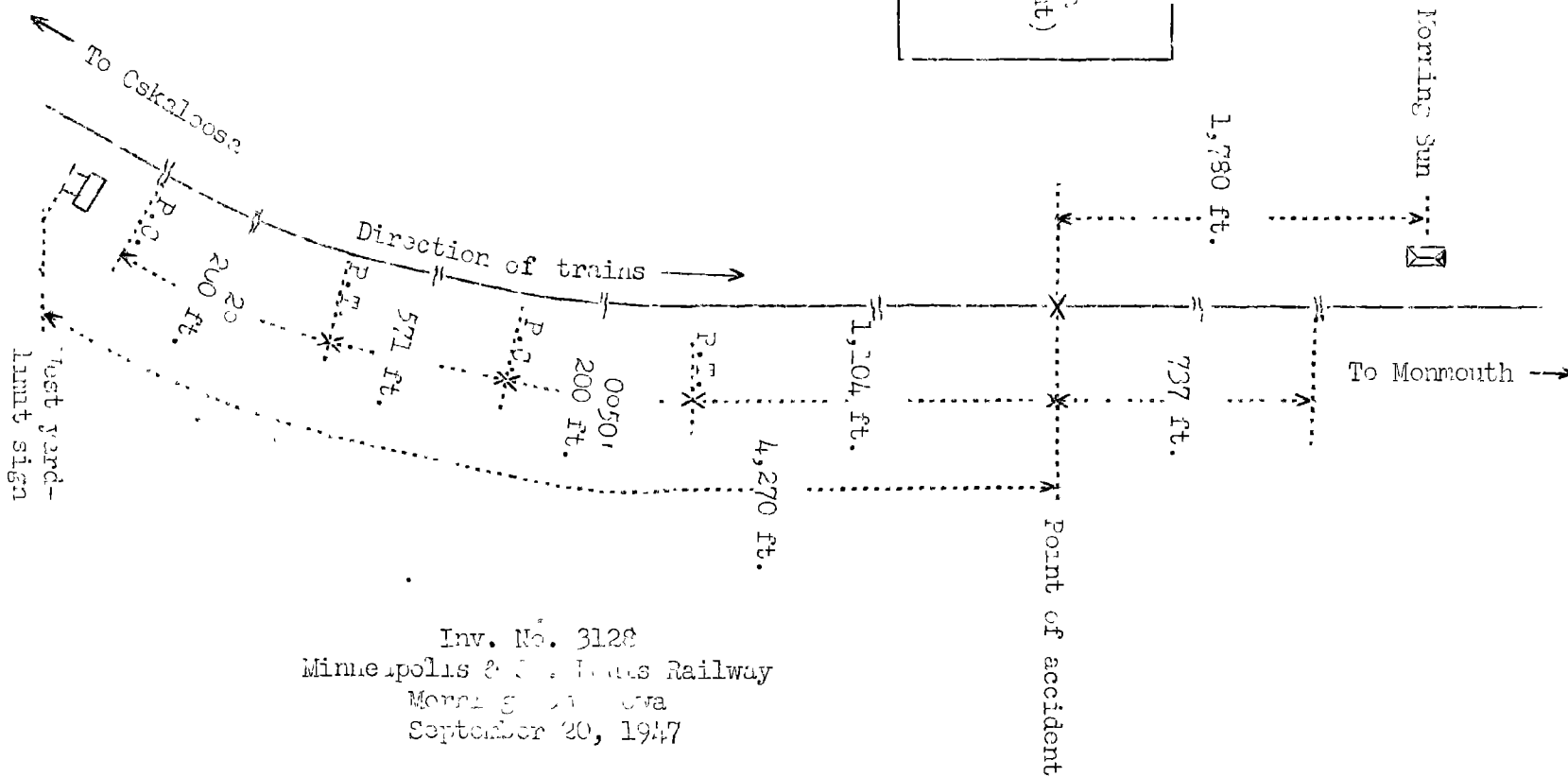
On September 20, 1947, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway at Morning Sun, Iowa, which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of four employees.

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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.

o Monmouth, Ill.  
 42.3 mi.  
 X Morning Sun, Iowa  
 (Point of accident)  
 16.2 mi.  
 o Olds  
 64.9 mi.  
 o Okaloosa, Iowa



## Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the railroad extending between Oskaloosa, Iowa, and Monmouth, Ill., 123.4 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred within yard limits on the main track at Morning Sun, 81.1 miles east of Oskaloosa, at a point 4,270 feet east of the west yard-limit sign and 1,780 feet west of the station. From the west there are, in succession, a 2° curve to the left 200 feet in length, a tangent 571 feet, a 0°50' curve to the left 200 feet, and a tangent 1,104 feet to the point of accident and 737 feet eastward. The grade for east-bound trains varies between 0.99 percent and 1.27 percent descending throughout a distance of 1.45 miles immediately west of the point of accident, where it is 1.21 percent descending.

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

### DEFINITIONS

\* \* \*

Fixed Signal--A signal of fixed location indicating a condition affecting the movement of a train.

Note to Definition of Fixed Signal.--The definition of a "Fixed Signal" covers such signals as \* \* \* yard limits \* \* \* or other means for displaying indications that govern the movement of a train.

\* \* \*

Under Control--Being able to stop within the distance track is seen to be clear.

93. \* \* \* Yard limits are indicated by yard limit boards. All trains (except first class trains) must approach and pass through \* \* \* yard limits under control. \* \* \*

93-a. \* \* \* trains may occupy the main track within \* \* \* yard limits without protection, \* \* \*

### Description of Accident

No. 10, an east-bound second-class freight train consisting of Diesel-electric engine 246, 22 cars and a caboose, stopped on the main track at Morning Sun about

4:55 p. m., with the rear end standing 4,270 feet east of the west yard-limit sign. About 15 minutes later, the rear end of this train was struck by Extra 610-627 East.

Extra 610-627 East, an east-bound freight train consisting of engines 610 and 627, coupled, 40 cars and a caboose, departed from Olds, the last open office, 16.2 miles west of Morning Sun, at 4:40 p. m., passed the west yard-limit sign at Morning Sun and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it collided with No. 10.

The caboose and the rear car of No. 10 were demolished. The four cars immediately ahead of the rear car of No. 10, and the engines and the first 12 cars of Extra 610-627 East, were derailed and badly damaged.

The engineer of the first engine of Extra 610-627 East was killed. The fireman of the first engine, the engineer and the firemen of the second engine and the front brakeman of Extra 610-627 East were injured.

It was cloudy and daylight at the time of the accident, which occurred at 5:10 p. m.

#### Discussion

About 15 minutes after No. 10, an east-bound second-class freight train, stopped on the main track at Morning Sun the rear end was struck by Extra 610-627 East, an east-bound freight train, at a point 4,270 feet east of the west yard-limit sign. When the accident occurred the engine and the first seven cars of No. 10 had been moved some distance eastward to the vicinity of a yard track to perform switching, and the members of the crew of this train were in the vicinity of the front portion of the train. They were not aware of anything being wrong until the collision occurred.

As Extra 610-627 East was approaching Morning Sun the engineers of both engines and the front brakeman, who was on the first engine, were maintaining a lookout ahead. The brakes of this train, which were in the charge of the engineer of the first engine, had been tested and were conditioned properly en route. Brake-pipe pressure of 70 pounds was being maintained. There was no condition of either engine that obscured the vision of the employees on the engines or distracted their attention. The engineer of the second engine said that when the engines were in the vicinity of the west yard-limit sign he estimated the speed of the train as about 25 miles per hour, and the air gage

on his engine indicated that the engineer of the first engine had made a brake-pipe reduction of about 12 pounds. Soon afterward, a further reduction of 8 pounds was made. The engineer of the second engine thought that this brake application of about 20 pounds remained applied until the brakes were applied in emergency just prior to the collision. The engineer of the first engine was killed. The fireman of the first engine said that the engineer had made two service brake-pipe reductions, which were not released, and that the speed of the train had been reduced to about 15 miles per hour when he saw the rear end of the preceding train a few hundred feet distant. Then he called a warning to the engineer, who immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose, and, until the brakes were applied in emergency, they thought the speed of the train was being controlled properly.

The accident occurred within yard limits, and, under the rules, Extra 61C-627 East was required to be operated in such manner 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 the following train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this thirtieth day of October, 1947.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.