

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2962
MISSOURI PACIFIC LINES
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT COADY, TEX., ON
DECEMBER 29, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: Missouri Pacific

Date: December 29, 1945

Location: Coady, Tex.

Kind of accident: Head-end collision

Trains involved: Passenger : Passenger

Train numbers: 21 : 12

Engine numbers: Electric-traction : Electric-traction
car 520 car 524

Consist: Electric-traction : Electric-traction
car . car

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

Operation: Timetable and train orders

Track: Single; tangent; 0.095 percent
ascending grade westward

Weather: Dense fog

Time: 8:36 a. m.

Casualties: 32 injured

Cause: Inferior train occupying main track
on time of opposing superior train

Recommendation: That the Missouri Pacific Lines in-
stall an adequate block system on
the line on which this accident
occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2962

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

MISSOURI PACIFIC LINES

February 7, 1946.

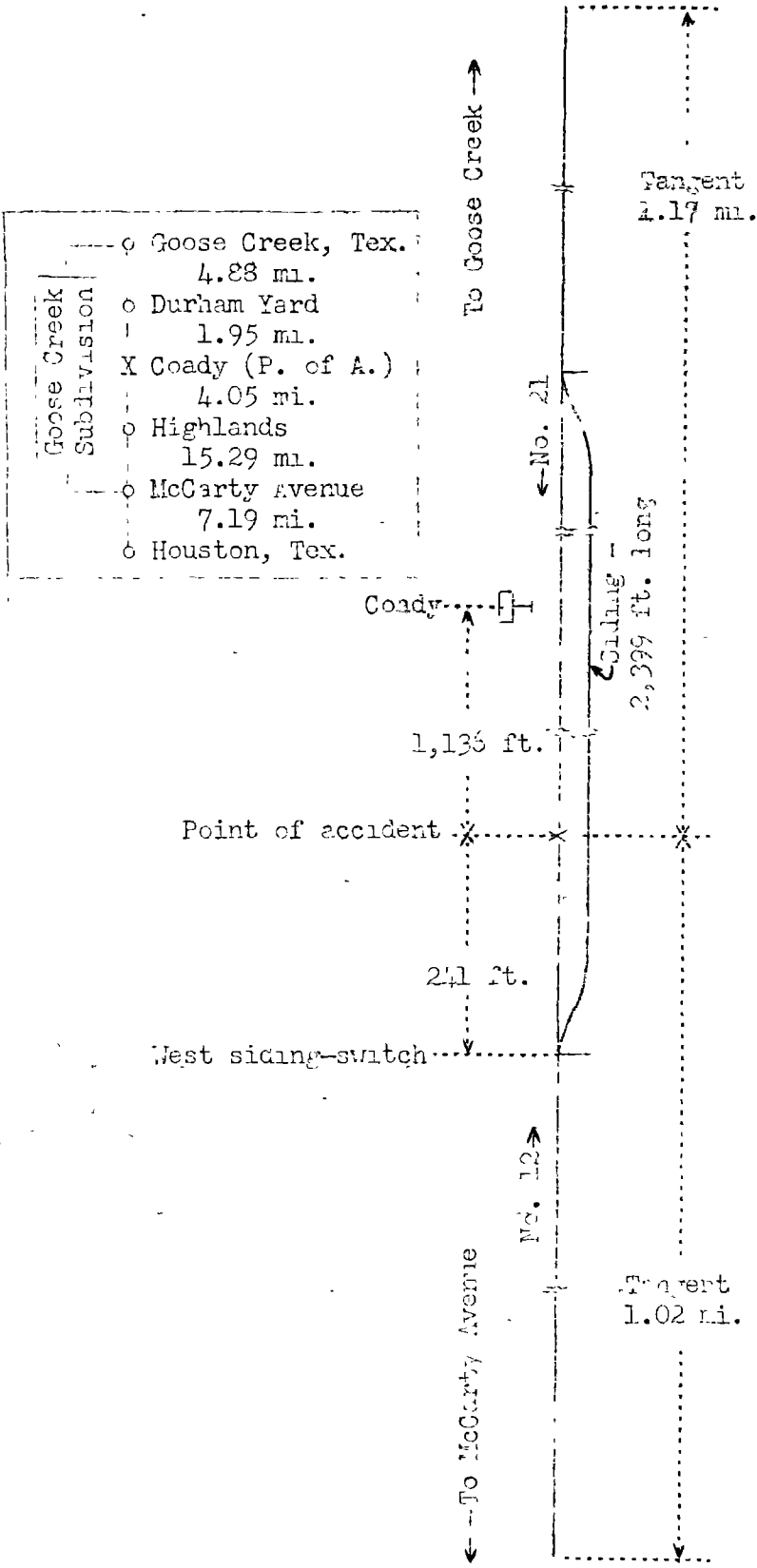
Accident at Coady, Tex., on December 29, 1945, caused by
an inferior train occupying the main track on the
time of an opposing superior train.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On December 29, 1945, there was a head-end collision
between two passenger trains on the Missouri Pacific Lines
at Coady, Tex., which resulted in the injury of 29 passen-
gers, 1 train-service employee and 2 employees not on duty.

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



Inv. No. 2962
 Missouri Pacific Lines
 Coady, Tex.
 December 29, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on the Goose Creek Subdivision, which extends between Goose Creek and McCarty Avenue, Houston, Tex., 26.17 miles, a single-track line equipped with an overhead trolley system for the electric propulsion of trains, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. At Coady, 6.83 miles west of Goose Creek, a siding 2,399 feet in length parallels the main track on the south. The west switch of this siding is 1,377 feet west of the station. The accident occurred on the main track 241 feet east of the west siding-switch. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 1.02 miles west of the point of accident and 1.17 miles eastward. The grade is 0.095 percent ascending westward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

5. * * *

The time applies at the switch where an opposing train enters the siding; * * *

* * *

S-71. A train is superior to another train by right, class or direction.

Right is conferred by train order; class and direction by time-table.

* * *

Direction is superior as between trains of the same class.

S-87. An inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains and failing to clear the main track by the time required by rule must be protected as prescribed by Rule 99.

* * *

S-89. At meeting points, the inferior train must take the siding and clear the time of the superior train not less than five minutes * * *

The inferior train must pull into the siding when practicable. If necessary to back in, it must be protected as prescribed by Rule 99.

99. When a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals a sufficient distance to insure full protection, placing two torpedoes, and when necessary, in addition, displaying lighted fuseses.

* * *

The front of the train must be protected in the same way when necessary by the forward trainman or fireman.

* * *

Time-table special instructions provide that west-bound trains are superior to east-bound trains of the same class.

The maximum authorized speed for the trains involved was 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 21, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisting of electric-traction passenger car 520, passed Durham Yard, 1.95 miles east of Coady, at 8:33 a. m., on time, stopped at the station at Coady, and departed about 8:35 a. m. About 1 minute later, while this train was moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it collided with No. 12 at a point 1,136 feet west of the station and 241 feet east of the west siding-switch at Coady.

No. 12, an east-bound first-class passenger train, consisting of electric-traction passenger car 534, departed from Highlands, 4.05 miles west of Coady, at 8:24 a. m., 1 hour 24 minutes late, passed the west siding-switch at Coady and had just stopped when it was struck by No. 21.

The front end of the traction car of each train was badly damaged. The front wheels of the front truck of traction car 520 were derailed.

There was a dense fog at the time of the accident, which occurred about 8:36 a. m.

The motorman of No. 21 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 44.9 trains.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that an inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains, and inferior trains must clear the time of opposing regular trains not less than 5 minutes. If an inferior train fails to clear the time of an opposing superior train, flag protection must be provided.

No. 21, a west-bound first-class passenger train, was due to leave Durham Yard, 1.95 miles east of Coady, at 8:33 a. m., and Coady at 8:36 a. m. The west switch of the siding at Coady is 1,377 feet west of the station, and, under the rules, the schedule time of regular trains at this point applies at the switch where an opposing inferior train enters the siding. No. 21 was superior to No. 12 by direction, and no train order restricting the authority of No. 21 with respect to No. 12 had been issued. No. 21 passed Durham Yard at 8:33 a. m., stopped at the station at Coady, then proceeded, and about 8:36 a. m. it collided with No. 12 at a point 241 feet east of the west siding-switch.

As No. 21 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 20 miles per hour. The crew of this train consisted of only a motorman, who was in the control compartment at the front end of the traction car. Because of dense fog, visibility was materially restricted. The motorman of No. 21 did not see No. 12 a sufficient distance to permit him to take action to stop his train.

No. 12 departed from Highlands, 4.05 miles west of Coady, at 8:24 a. m. The crew of this train consisted of only a motorman. This employee understood that if his train proceeded to Coady for No. 21 it was required to be into clear on the siding not later than 8:31 a. m., and that flag protection was required to be furnished if his train was not clear of the main track at the required time. The motorman said that when his train was approaching the west siding-switch at Coady he looked at his watch and read the time as 8:31 a. m. Because of the arrangement of the overhead trolley at the east switch of the siding, it is easier to manipulate the trolley pole at that point than at the west switch, and the motorman intended to operate the train to the east switch to clear for No. 21. He was confident that sufficient time remained for his train to enter the siding at the east switch to clear for No. 21 not later than 8:33 a. m. He had compared his watch with a standard clock about 14 hours prior to the occurrence of the accident, and his watch indicated the correct time. When No. 12 passed the west siding-switch the speed was about 15 miles per hour. Soon afterward the motorman saw No. 21 approaching and he immediately applied the brake. No. 12 had just stopped when the collision occurred.

Trains are operated in this territory by timetable and train orders only. This accident might have been prevented if an adequate block system had been in use, since these opposing trains would not have been permitted to occupy the same block simultaneously.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by an inferior train occupying the main track on the time of an opposing superior train.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Missouri Pacific Lines install an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this seventh day of February, 1946.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.