

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2765

THE MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR FELTON, ARK., ON

JANUARY 20, 1944

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Missouri Pacific  
Date: January 20, 1944  
Location: Felton, Ark.  
Kind of accident: Derailment  
Train involved: Freight  
Train number: First 360  
Engine number: 1314  
Consist: 83 cars, caboose  
Speed: 30-35 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable and train orders  
Track: Single; 1°57' curve; level  
Weather: Clear  
Time: 11:50 a. m.  
Casualties: 1 killed; 2 injured  
Cause: Obstruction on rail

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2765

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

THE MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

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February 14, 1944.

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Accident near Felton, Ark., on January 20, 1944, caused  
by an obstruction on rail.

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

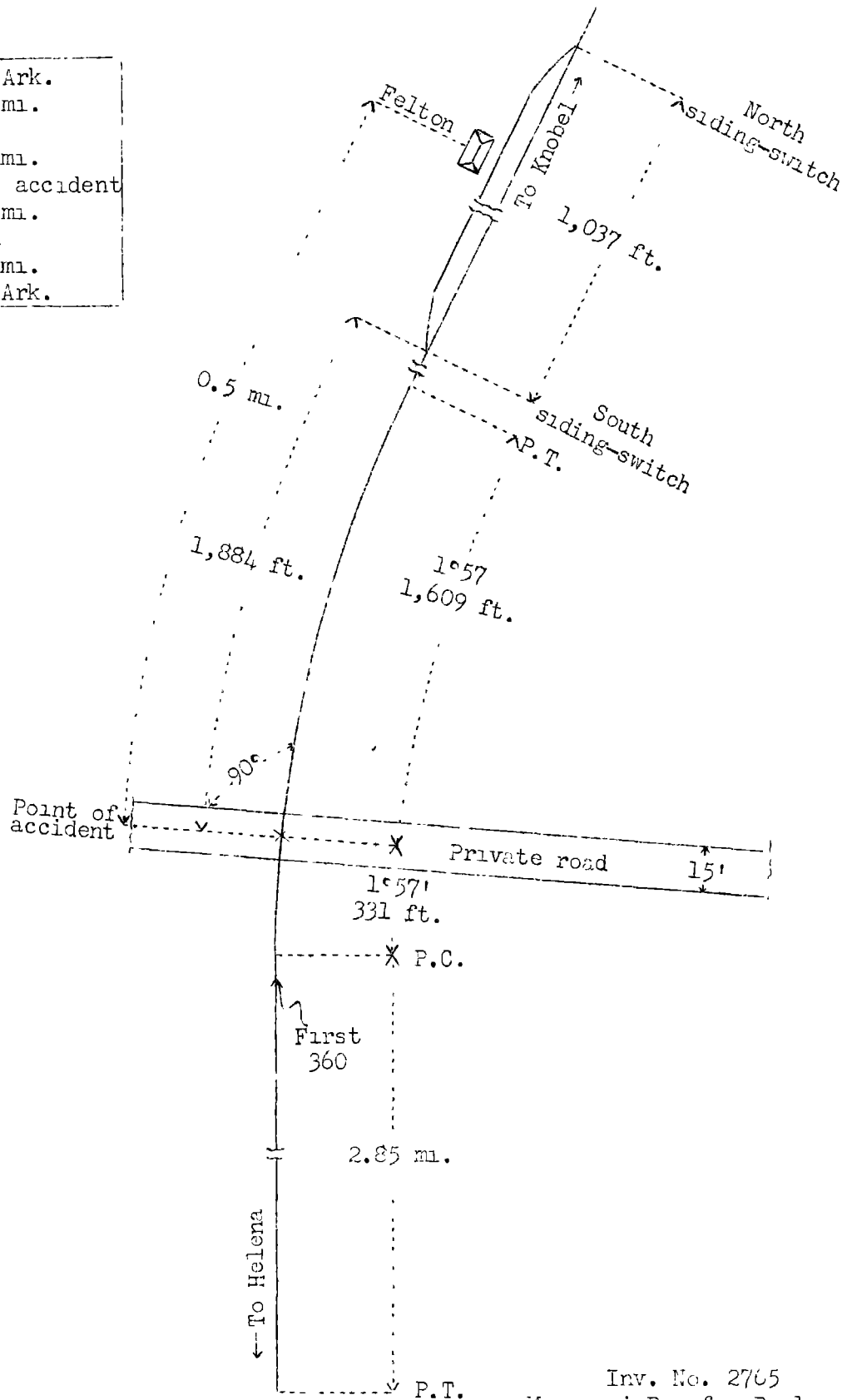
PATTERSON, Chairman:

On January 20, 1944, there was a derailment of a freight train on the Missouri Pacific Railroad near Felton, Ark., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of two employees.

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<sup>1</sup>Under 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 Knobel, Ark.  
111.48 mi.
- o Felton  
0.50 mi.
- X Point of accident  
2.60 mi.
- o Marianna  
25.50 mi.
- o Helena, Ark.



Inv. No. 2765  
Missouri Pacific Railroad  
Felton, Ark.  
January 20, 1944

### Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Memphis Division designated as the Paragould Subdivision and extending between Helena and Knobel, Ark., 140.08 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 at a private-road grade crossing 0.5 mile south of the station at Felton. From the south there was a tangent 2.85 miles, which was followed by a 1°57' curve to the right 331 feet to the point of accident and 1,609 feet beyond. The grade was practically level.

The private road intersected the railroad at right angles, and was an unimproved road. The crossing was about 15 feet wide and consisted of mixed cinders, gravel and soil. In the vicinity of the crossing the track was laid on a fill, the maximum height of which was about 3 feet. The track structure consisted of 90-pound rail, 39 feet in length, on 24 treated ties to the rail length. It was single-spiked, fully tieplated, provided with 8 rail anchors per rail length and was ballasted with gravel to a depth of 6 inches. The south switch of a siding 1,037 feet long, which paralleled the main track on the west, was 1,884 feet north of the center-line of the crossing. Entry to the siding was made through a No. 10 turnout.

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

### Description of Accident

First 360, a north-bound second-class freight train, consisting of engine 1314, of the 2-8-2 type, 83 cars and a caboose, passed Marianna, 3.1 miles south of Felton and the last open office, at 11:45 a. m., 3 hours 53 minutes late, and while it was moving at a speed of 30 to 35 miles per hour the engine and first 16 cars were derailed.

The engine-truck wheels were derailed to the left on the crossing and continued in line with the track 1,884 feet to the south siding-switch, where the general derailment occurred. The engine and its tender, remaining coupled, stopped, badly damaged, on their right sides, across the track and at right angles to it, with the front end of the engine 226 feet north of the south siding-switch. The first to the fifteenth cars, inclusive, stopped, considerably damaged, in various positions across the track. The front truck of the sixteenth car was derailed.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 11:50 a. m.

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

Discussion

First 360 was moving on a 1°57' curve to the right at a speed of 30 to 35 miles per hour, in territory where the maximum authorized speed was 45 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. When the engine was moving over the private-road grade crossing the fireman heard an unusual noise. Immediately afterward the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, then the general derailment occurred at the south siding-switch.

Examination of the track disclosed a flange mark on top of the head of the west rail. This mark started about 11 feet north of the south end of the crossing and extended 15 feet northward and outward. From a point about 6 feet north of the north end of this mark and extending northward to the south siding-switch, flange marks appeared on the ties inside the east rail and outside the west rail. From the switch to the point where the engine stopped the track was torn up.

The investigation disclosed that the section foreman operated his motor-car over the crossing about 2 hours prior to the accident, and there was no unusual condition at the crossing. Just prior to the accident a drag was operated over the crossing in grading the road on both sides of the crossing. When the drag passed over the crossing, a considerable quantity of soil, cinders and gravel was deposited on both rails and on the area between the rails. The train crew received no warning of this abnormal condition. After the accident, the material between the rails was found to extend about 1-1/2 inches above the level of the top of the rail. Outside the rails it was 3-1/2 to 4-1/2 inches above the level of the top of the rail.

Apparently there was sufficient material on top of the head of the high rail at the crossing to cause the left engine-truck wheel to be raised high enough for the flange to mount the high rail.

Cause

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

Dated at Washington, D. C., this fourteenth day of February, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.