

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2966
MISSOURI-KANSAS-TEXAS RAILROAD COMPANY OF TEXAS
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR ROYSE CITY, TEX., ON
JANUARY 18, 1946

SUMMARY

Railroad: Missouri-Kansas-Texas of Texas
Date: January 13, 1946
Location: Royse City, Tex.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: 281 : 272
Engine numbers: 709 : 840
Consist: 44 cars, caboose : 48 cars, caboose
Estimated speed: 8 m. p. h. : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; 2° curve; 1.16 percent ascending grade southward
Weather: Clear
Time: 12:13 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured
Cause: Inferior train occupying main track on time of opposing superior train
Recommendation: That the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad Company of Texas install an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2966

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

MISSOURI-KANSAS-TEXAS RAILROAD COMPANY OF TEXAS

February 25, 1946.

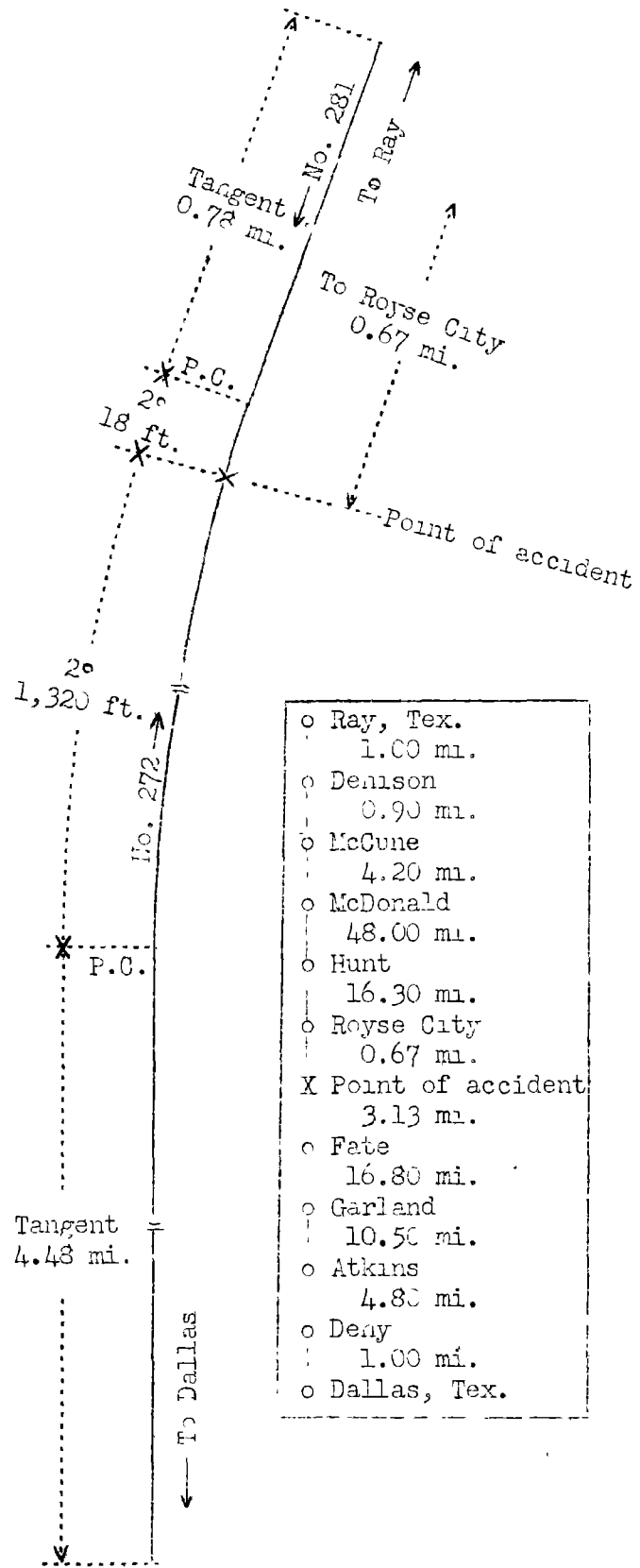
Accident near Royse City, Tex., on January 13, 1946, caused
by an inferior train occupying the main track on the
time of an opposing superior train.

1
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 13, 1946, there was a head-end collision
between two freight trains on the line of the Missouri-
Kansas-Texas Railroad Company of Texas near Royse City,
Tex.; which resulted in the death of one employee, and the
injury of three employees.

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.



| | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| o | Ray, Tex. | 1.00 mi. |
| o | Denison | 0.90 mi. |
| o | McCune | 4.20 mi. |
| o | McDonald | 48.00 mi. |
| o | Hunt | 16.30 mi. |
| o | Royse City | 0.67 mi. |
| X | Point of accident | 3.13 mi. |
| o | Fate | 16.80 mi. |
| o | Garland | 10.50 mi. |
| o | Atkins | 4.80 mi. |
| o | Deny | 1.00 mi. |
| o | Dallas, Tex. | |

Inv. No. 2966
 Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad Company of Texas
 Royse City, Tex.
 January 18, 1946

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Dallas Division extending between Ray and Dallas, Tex., 107.3 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track 71.07 miles south of Ray, at a point 0.67 mile south of Royse City. From the north there is a tangent 0.73 mile in length, which is followed by a 2° curve to the left 13 feet to the point of accident and 1,320 feet southward. From the south there is a tangent 4.48 miles in length, which is followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 1.13 percent ascending southward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

5. * * *

* * * the time applies to the switch where an inferior train enters the siding; * * *

* * *

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.

Right is superior to class or direction.

Direction is superior as between trains of the same class.

72. * * *

Trains in the direction specified by the timetable are superior to trains of the same class in the opposite direction.

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.

88. At meeting points between trains of the same class, the inferior train must clear the main track before the leaving time of the superior train.

* * *

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, * * *

* * *

The front of the train must be protected in the same way when necessary by the head brakeman and if the head brakeman is not available by the fireman.

* * *

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS

* * *

C

GIVING RIGHT OVER AN OPPOSING TRAIN

(1) No. 1 has right over No. 2 G to X.

* * *

These orders give right to the train first named over the other train between the points named. If the trains meet at either of the designated points, the first-named train must take the siding, unless the order otherwise prescribes.

E

TIME ORDERS

* * *

(3) No. 1 wait H 9 59 a. m. for No. 2.

The train first named must not pass the designated point before the time given, unless the other train has arrived. The train last named is required to run with respect to the time specified, at the designated point or any intermediate station where schedule time is earlier than the time specified in the order, as before required to run with respect to the schedule time of the train first named.

* * *

Time-table special instructions provide that north-bound trains are superior to trains of the same class in the opposite direction.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

At Ray, 70.4 miles north of Royse City, the crew of No. 281, a south-bound third-class freight train, received copies of train order No. 96 reading as follows:

No 281 Eng 709 has right over
No 272 Eng 840 McCune to Deny

McCune and Deny are, respectively, 68.5 miles north and 35.9 miles south of Royse City. At Hunt, 16.3 miles north of Royse City, the crew received copies of train order No. 99 reading in part as follows:

No 281 Eng 709 Wait Royse City
1215 am for No 272 Eng 840 * * *

No. 281, consisting of engine 709, 44 cars and a caboose, departed from Hunt, the last open office, at 11:35 p. m., January 17, 25 minutes late, departed from Royse City at 12:16 a. m., January 18, 26 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 8 miles per hour it collided with No. 272 at a point 0.67 mile south of Royse City.

At Dallas, 36.9 miles south of Royse City, the crew of No. 272, a north-bound third-class freight train, received copies of train order No. 96. At Garland, 20.6 miles south of Royse City, they received copies of train order No. 99. This train, consisting of engine 840, 48 cars and a caboose, passed Garland, the last open office, at 11:17 p. m., January 17, 3 minutes late, passed Fate, 3.8 miles south of Royse City, about 12:12 a. m., January 18, 29 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it collided with No. 281.

The engines of both trains, the fifteenth, the twentieth and the twenty-first cars of No. 281, and the ninth car of No. 272 were derailed and damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 12:18 a. m.

The engineer of No. 272 was killed. The engineer, the fireman and the front brakeman of No. 281 were 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 12.2 trains.

Discussion

The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 96, which gave No. 281, a south-bound third-class train, right over No. 272, a north-bound third-class train, from McCune to Deny, and copies of train order No. 99, which required No. 281 to wait at Royse City until 12:15 a. m. for No. 272. Under the rules, No. 272 was required to be into clear on the siding at Royse City not later than 12:15 a. m., if it proceeded to that station to meet No. 281. No. 281 departed from Royse City at 12:16 a. m. and, about 12:18 a. m., when it was 0.67 mile south of Royse City, it collided with No. 272.

As No. 281 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 20 miles per hour. The headlight was lighted brightly and the enginemen were maintaining a look-out ahead. The front brakeman was in the brakeman's booth on the tender of the engine. The first the enginemen were aware of anything being wrong was when the fireman saw the reflection of the headlight of the approaching train as the engine of that train was moving on the curve a few hundred feet distant, and he called a warning to the engineer. The engineer immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 281 was about 8 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The members of the crew of No. 272 had compared time, and there was a variation of only a few seconds in their watches. They received copies of train order No. 96 at Dallas, about 36 miles south of the point of accident, about 2 hours 15 minutes prior to the time the accident occurred. In addition, they received copies of train order No. 99 at Garland, about 20 miles south of the point of accident, about 1 hour prior to the time the accident occurred. Each member of the crew read these train orders. They understood that, under the provisions of train order No. 96, their train was required to clear the time of No. 281, and that flag protection was required to be furnished if their train was not clear of the main track at the required time. When the crew received train order No. 99, each member read the order but they did not confer with each other to ascertain if they had the same understanding of this order. When No. 272 was approaching Fate, a siding 3.8 miles south of Royse City, the brakes became applied in emergency because of a broken air-brake branch pipe on the forty-fifth car. The train stopped about 12:01 a. m. at a point about 0.5 mile south of Fate. Instead of cutting out the brake on this car the conductor closed the angle cock on the front end of the forty-fifth car, and bled off the brakes on this car, the rear three cars and the caboose. The train departed from this point about 12:06 a. m. and passed Fate, the last siding south of Royse City, about 12:12 a. m. The front brakeman and the fireman said that when the engine was in the vicinity of the siding at Fate they informed the engineer that there was not sufficient time remaining for their train to proceed to Royse City to clear for No. 281. Then the engineer informed the front brakeman and the

fireman that, according to his understanding of train order No. 99, No. 281 was required to wait at Royse City until 12:25 a. m. for No. 272. These employees did not reread the train order, and no further action was taken until they saw the approaching train a few hundred feet distant. Then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 272 was about 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred. The engineer was killed. The conductor and the flagman, who were in the caboose, said that when their train was passing the siding at Fate they were aware that there was not sufficient time remaining for the train to proceed to Royse City to clear for No. 281. However, because the angle cock at the front end of the forty-fifth car was closed, they had no means of applying the brakes to stop the train. The flagman displayed a lighted red fusee from a window on the right side of the caboose in an attempt to attract the attention of the employees on the engine.

In this territory trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. This carrier has an automatic block-signal system in operation between Denison and McDonald, Tex., 5.1 miles, and between Atkins and Dallas, 5.8 miles. The accident occurred 64.97 miles south of the south end of the first-mentioned territory and 30.43 miles north of the north end of the latter. The 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-Kansas-Texas Railroad Company of Texas install an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-fifth day of February, 1946.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.