

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2744
THE NASHVILLE, CHATTANOOGA & ST. LOUIS
RAILWAY COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT CHATTANOOGA, TENN., ON
NOVEMBER 22, 1943

SUMMARY

Railroad: Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis
Date: November 22, 1943
Location: Chattanooga, Tenn.
Kind of accident: Side collision
Trains involved: N. C. & St. L. : Southern yard
passenger engine and cars
Train number: 3 :
Engine numbers: 520 : 1672
Consist: 13 cars : 20 cars
Speed: Standing : 8-15 m. p. h.
Operation: Yard limits
Track: Double; tangent; practically level
Weather: Clear
Time: About 2:22 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured
Cause: Absence of a light with which
switch could be equipped,
and the inability to con-
stantly operate the engine
moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2744

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

THE NASHVILLE, CHATTANOOGA & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY COMPANY

December 21, 1943.

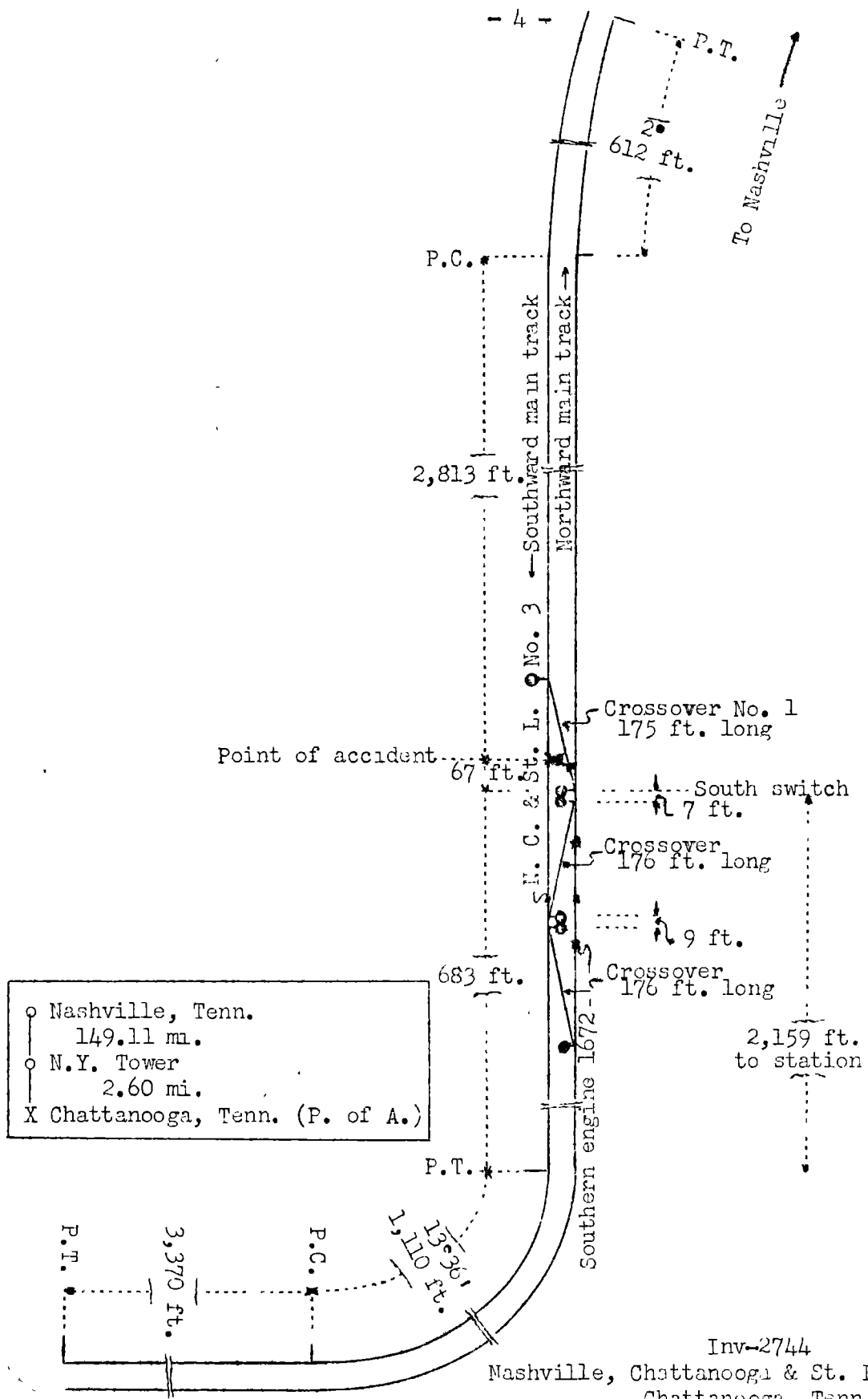
Accident at Chattanooga, Tenn., on November 22, 1943, caused by the absence of a light with which the switch was normally equipped, and by failure properly to control speed of a yard engine moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On November 22, 1943, there was a side collision between a passenger train of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway and a yard engine of the Southern Railway on the line of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway at Chattanooga, Tenn., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of two passengers and one employee.

¹Under 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 Nashville, Tenn.
 149.11 mi.
 o N.Y. Tower
 2.60 mi.
 X Chattanooga, Tenn. (P. of A.)

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Chattanooga Division extending between Nashville and Chattanooga, Tenn., 151.71 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a double-track line, within yard limits, over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. Between N. Y. Tower and East End Avenue, respectively, 2.6 miles north and 1.14 miles south of Chattanooga, trains and yard engines of the Southern Railway, hereinafter referred to as the Southern, were operated over the tracks of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway, hereinafter referred to as the N. C. & St. L. In the vicinity of the point of accident three crossovers connected the northward and the southward main tracks. The most northerly crossover, 175 feet in length, was facing-point for movements with the current of traffic, and its south switch was 2,159 feet north of the station. The accident occurred on the southward main track at the fouling point of crossover No. 1, 67 feet north of the south switch. From the north there was a tangent 2,815 feet to the point of accident. From the south there were, in succession, a tangent 3,370 feet in length, a $13^{\circ}36'$ curve to the left 1,110 feet, a tangent 683 feet and a turnout to the left 67 feet to the point of accident. The grade was practically level.

The switch-stand for the south switch of crossover No. 1 was of the hand-throw low-stand type. The switch lamp was electrically lighted, and the center of each lens was $12\frac{3}{8}$ inches above the level of the top of the rail and 6 feet $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches west of the center-line of the track. The lenses were $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter and were provided with 9-inch flared-disc reflectors. When the switch was lined for entry to the crossover a red aspect and a red disc were displayed.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

27. A signal imperfectly displayed, or the absence of a signal at a place where one is usually shown, must be regarded as a stop signal, * * *.

93. Certain yards will be indicated by yard or station limit signs. Within such limits the main track may be used, protecting against first and second class trains. Third class and extra trains must move on the main track under such control that they can stop within the range of their vision.

104 (a). * * *. Enginemen must know that de-rails and other switches are properly set before passing over them.

Time-table special instructions read in part as follows:

YARD LIMITS DESIGNATED BY SIGNS

* * * Chattanooga.

* * *

25. Between Cravens (Lewis Street Tower) and East End Avenue, Chattanooga, trains and engines must run under control prepared to stop within range of vision.

* * *

Description of Accident

No. 3, a south-bound first-class N. C. & St. L. passenger train, consisted of engine 580, two express cars, two mail cars, two express-mail cars, one passenger-baggage car, three coaches, one dining car and two Pullman sleeping cars, in the order named. The first two cars were of steel-underframe construction, and the remainder were of steel construction. This train passed N. Y. Tower, 2.6 miles north of Chattanooga and the last open office, at 2:15 a. m., 10 minutes late, and stopped on the southward main track with the engine standing 180 feet south of the south switch of crossover No. 1 at 2:20 a. m. About 2 minutes later the second and third cars were struck by yard engine 1672.

Southern yard engine 1672, headed south, was coupled to the north end of a cut of 20 passenger-equipment cars, which consisted of 9 Pullman sleeping cars and 11 tourist-sleeping cars. After a terminal air-brake test was made at Citico Yard, about 2.5 miles south of the point of accident, this cut of cars departed northward about 1:55 a. m., entered the N. C. & St. L. northward main track at East End Avenue, and while moving at an estimated speed of 8 to 15 miles per hour it entered crossover No. 1 and collided with the second and third cars of No. 3.

The east side of the second car of No. 3 was slightly damaged and the rear truck was derailed. The front truck of the third car was derailed and the front end was crushed. The tender of engine 1672 stopped on its left side, across the northward main track and at right angles to it. Both

trucks were detached. Engine 1672 was derailed, and stopped upright about 20 feet south of the tender and parallel to it. The cab was damaged. The first car in the yard cut was derailed and the front end was damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 2:22 a. m.

The fireman of the yard engine was killed, and the engineer of the yard engine was injured.

Discussion

The rules of this carrier governing operation within that part of the yard limits at Chattanooga where the accident occurred provide that all trains and engines may use the main track but must be operated prepared to stop within the range of vision. In addition, enginemen must know that switches are lined properly for the movement of their train.

About 2:20 a. m., No. 3, a south-bound passenger train, stopped on the southward main track with the engine standing 180 feet south of the south switch of a facing-point crossover. About 2 minutes later, the second and third cars of this train were struck by yard engine 1672. This engine, in backward motion and moving northward on the northward main track, was pulling a cut of passenger-equipment cars. As it was approaching crossover No. 1, the headlight on the tender was lighted, the speed was from 8 to 15 miles per hour, and the engineer was maintaining a lookout ahead. From the engineer's location in the cab a clear view could be had of crossover switch-lamps between the main tracks at points 259 feet, 250 feet, 74 feet and 67 feet south of the point of accident. The switch-stand involved was 7 feet north of another crossover switch-stand and in line with it. About the time that engine 1672 arrived at the south switch of crossover No. 1, the engineer looked toward the rear of the cut of cars for lantern signals. The engine entered the crossover and the collision occurred immediately afterward. After the accident, the south switch was found lined for movement through the crossover, and the switch lock was lying on a tie near the latch. The switch lamp was 5 feet west of the southward main track and about 25 feet north of the switch.

Yard engine 1672 was required to be operated so that it could be stopped short of any switch not properly lined. The engineer said that he had not been examined on the operating rules of the N. C. & St. L., but was familiar with the physical characteristics and the track arrangement in the territory

involved: Bulletins of the N. C. & St. L. were posted on Southern bulletin boards. Two switch-lamp aspects should have been displayed in the vicinity of the south switch, but the engineer said that he saw only one aspect, which was green. He attached no particular significance to this as he thought that the N. C. & St. L. might have made some change recently in the track arrangement; however, he had not observed any N. C. & St. L. bulletin concerning any change. It is not known if the fireman observed any abnormal condition, as he was killed in the accident. No other member of the crew observed anything wrong in the vicinity of the switch. A yard engine of the N. C. & St. L. last used this crossover about 2:15 a. m. A member of this crew said that he lined the switch for movement on the northward main track and locked it, but at that time there was no lamp attached to the switch-stand. Another member of this crew said that the light was not burning, but he did not observe if the lamp was attached to the switch-stand. If the switch-lamp had been in proper position and lighted, a red aspect would have been displayed when the switch was open. This aspect would have been plainly visible to the crew of the Southern yard engine, and the accident would no doubt have been prevented.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by the absence of a light with which the switch was normally equipped, and by failure properly to control the speed of a yard engine moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-first day of December, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.