

**RAILROAD ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

**Report No 3786**

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THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY

HIMRODS JCT , N Y

OCTOBER 16, 1957

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**INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION**

**Washington**

## SUMMARY

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DATE	October 16, 1957	
RAILROAD	New York Central	
LOCATION	Himrods Jet , N Y.	
KIND OF ACCIDENT	Collision	
EQUIPMENT INVOLVED	Locomotive with cars	Freight train
TRAIN NUMBER		Extra 1079 North
LOCOMOTIVE NUMBERS	Diesel-electric units 1619, 1782, and 6600	Diesel-electric units 1079, 3369, and 1011
CONSISTS	19 cars	72 cars, caboose
SPEEDS	Undetermined	26 m p h
OPERATION	Timetable, train orders, and manual block-signal system	
TRACKS	Double, tangent, 0 82 percent descending grade northward	
WEATHER	Clear	
TIME	4 45 a m	
CASUALTIES	3 injured	
CAUSE	Locomotive with cars occupying main track without authority	

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO 3786

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

THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY

May 19, 1958

Accident at Hinrods Jct , N Y , on October 16, 1957, caused by a locomotive with cars occupying a main track without authority

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

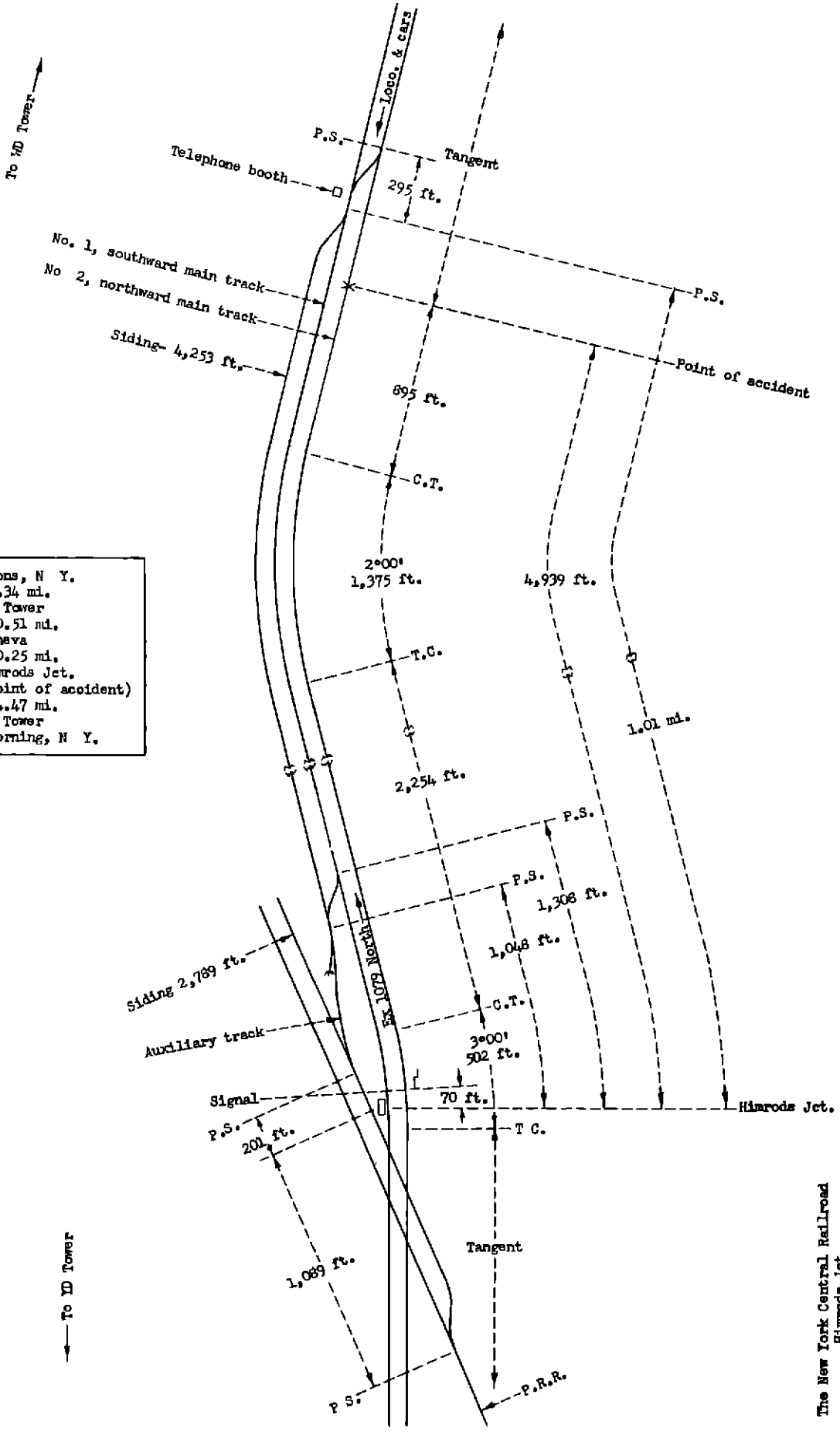
*TUGGLE, Commissioner*

On October 16, 1957, there was a collision between a freight train and a locomotive with cars on the New York Central Railroad at Hinrods Jct . N Y , which resulted in the injury of three train-service 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 Commissioner Tuggle for consideration and disposition

- Lyons, N Y.  
4.34 mi.
- WD Tower  
10.51 mi.
- Geneva  
20.25 mi.
- X Himrods Jct.  
(Point of accident)  
34.47 mi.
- ID Tower  
Corning, N Y.



### Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Pennsylvania Division extending between YD Tower, Corning, N Y , and WD Tower, near Lyons, N Y , 65 23 miles. This is a double-track line over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders, and a manual block-signal system. The main tracks from west to east are designated as No 1, southward, and No 2, northward. N Y C trains operating between Southport Yard, Elmira, N Y , and WD Tower, operate over the Erie Railroad from Southport Yard to HO Tower, 5 1 miles, and over the Pennsylvania Railroad from HO Tower to the N Y C at Himrods Jct , N Y , 32 9 miles. Timetable directions are north and south on the N Y C , and east and west on the P R R . At Himrods Jct , 34 47 miles north of YD Tower, tracks of the N Y C are laid on a bridge extending over a single-track line of the P R R . A siding 4,253 feet in length parallels the N Y C main tracks on the west. The north switch of this siding is located 1 01 miles north of the station. The north switch of a trailing-point crossover connecting tracks Nos 1 and 2 is located 295 feet north of the north siding-switch. A crossover connects the siding and track No 1. The north switch of this crossover, which is facing-point for southbound movements on track No 1, is located 1,308 feet north of the station. A siding 2,789 feet in length parallels the P R R main track on the north. The east switch of this siding is located 1,089 feet east of the station. An auxiliary track diverges to the north from the siding. The switch of this track is facing-point for westbound movements on the siding and is located 201 feet west of the station. This track connects with the south end of the N Y C siding at a point 1,048 feet north of the station. Movements between the P R R and the N Y C are authorized by the operator at Himrods Jct. The accident occurred on track No 2 at a point 4,939 feet north of the station. From the south on tracks Nos 1 and 2 there are, in succession, a 3<sup>o</sup> curve to the left 502 feet in length, a tangent 2,254 feet, a 2<sup>o</sup> curve to the right 1,375 feet, a tangent 895 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance northward. The grade is 0 82 percent descending northward at the point of accident.

A manual block signal of the upper-quadrant semaphore type, governing northbound movements on track No 2, is located 70 feet north of the station.

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

#### DEFINITIONS

##### Pilot

Pilot —An employee assigned to a train when the engineman or conductor, or both, are not fully acquainted with the physical characteristics or rules of the railroad, or portion of the railroad, over which the train is to be moved.

#### OPERATING RULES

39. 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. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

Conductors and enginemen are responsible for the protection of their trains.

\* \* \*

106 Both the conductor and the engineman are responsible for the safety of the train and the observance of the rules, and, under conditions not provided for by the rules, must take every precaution for protection

D-152 When a train or engine crosses over to, or obstructs another track, unless otherwise provided, it must first be protected as prescribed by Rule 99

365 \* \* \* A train or engine must not enter a block or foul the main track, or cross from one main track to another, without permission of the signalman

\* \* \*

#### CONDUCTORS

877 They must see that the men employed on the train are familiar with their duties, \* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains in the vicinity of the point of accident is 30 miles per hour

A booth equipped with a telephone for communicating with operators is located about 120 feet north of the north siding-switch and west of track No 1. The telephone is so designed that a pushbutton must be operated when speaking and released when listening

#### Description of Accident

Extra 1619 West, a westbound N Y C freight train operating over the P R R from HO Tower to Himrods Jct consisted of N Y C diesel-electric units 1619, 1782, and 6600, coupled in multiple-unit control, 112 cars, a caboose, and P R R diesel-electric units 9531A and 9521B, coupled in multiple-unit control, in the order named. This train originated at Southport Yard, passed HO Tower at 2 16 a m, and stopped at the east switch of the P R R siding at Himrods Jct at 3 40 a m. As the train entered the siding the coupler at the front end of the 20th car became broken, the train parted, and the brakes became applied in emergency. Shortly after, the locomotive and the 1st to the 19th cars, inclusive, proceeded westward on the P R R siding and stopped at the station. After receiving a Clearance Form A from the operator at that point authorizing movement to the north end of the N Y C siding, the locomotive and the cut of cars proceeded westward on the P R R siding, entered the auxiliary track, entered the N Y C siding, and stopped at the north end of the siding. Shortly after, the movement proceeded northward to track No 1 and over the crossover near the north end of the siding to track No 2. The movement then proceeded southward on track No 2 and while moving at an undetermined speed it collided with Extra 1079 North at a point 4,939 feet north of the station.

Extra 1079 North, a northbound freight train, consisted of diesel-electric units 1079, 3369, and 1011, coupled in multiple-unit control, 72 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Corning at 3 30 a m, passed the manual block signal at Himrods Jct, which indicated Proceed, at 4 45 a m, and while moving at a speed of 26 miles per hour, as indicated by the tape of the speed-recording device, it collided with the locomotive and cut of cars.

The diesel-electric units, the front truck of the first car, the rear truck of the second car, and both trucks of the third to the fifth cars, inclusive, of Extra 1079 North were derailed. A separation occurred between the first and second diesel-electric units. The first diesel-electric

unit stopped on its right side with the front end near the point of collision. The front and rear ends of this unit were, respectively, about 25 feet and 15 feet east of the track. The second and third diesel-electric units, and the first and second cars stopped upright and in line on the track structure. The front end of the second diesel-electric unit stopped at the point of collision. The other derailed cars stopped in various positions on or near the track structure. The first and second diesel-electric units were heavily damaged by the collision and were further damaged by fire which resulted from the collision. The third diesel-electric unit was slightly damaged. Two of the derailed cars were destroyed, one was heavily damaged, and two were slightly damaged. The four cars at the south end of the cut of cars were derailed and were destroyed.

The engineer, the fireman, and the front brakeman of Extra 1079 North were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:45 a.m.

### Discussion

On the day of the accident the members of the crew of Extra 1619 West were not qualified for operation over the Erie Railroad between Southport Yard and HO Tower, nor over the PRR between HO Tower and Hamrods Jct. A PRR pilot engineer and a PRR pilot conductor were assigned to the train at Southport Yard. As Extra 1619 West was approaching Hamrods Jct., the engineer, the fireman, the pilot engineer, and the front brakeman were in the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit. The pilot engineer was operating the locomotive. The conductor, the pilot conductor, the swing brakeman, the flagman, and the PRR flagman of the helper crew were in the caboose. The engineer and the fireman of the helper crew were in the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit of the helper locomotive. When the train stopped at the east switch of the PRR siding at Hamrods Jct., the front brakeman lined the switch for entry to the siding. The pilot conductor closed the brake-pipe angle cock at the rear end of the caboose in preparation for detaching the helper locomotive but failed to notify the engine crew. As a result of the closed angle cock, the brakes of the helper locomotive remained applied after the pilot engineer released the brakes of the train. As the train entered the siding the coupler at the front end of the 20th car failed. The conductor said that he intended to set the defective car out by use of chains. The conductor, the pilot conductor, the pilot engineer, and the front brakeman proceeded to the tower. The conductor informed the operator at that point that he intended to move the locomotive and the 1st to the 19th cars, inclusive, northward over the auxiliary track to the north end of the siding. The locomotive and the first car were to be detached at that point and were to proceed northward to track No. 1. The movement was to proceed southward on track No. 1, over the crossover near the tower to the auxiliary track, and then westward on the PRR siding. The operator informed the operator at GY Tower, Geneva, N.Y., 21.15 miles north of Hamrods Jct., and the operator at that point said that he would hold southbound movements on track No. 1 until the switching operations were completed. The operator at Hamrods Jct. then issued a Clearance Form A authorizing the locomotive and cut of cars to proceed to the north end of the NYC siding. The operator instructed the crew to obtain permission from her by use of the telephone near the north end of the siding before proceeding to track No. 1. The pilot conductor, who was not qualified for operation on the NYC, offered to assist in the switching operations. The conductor then instructed the pilot conductor and the front brakeman regarding the movements. The conductor remained at the tower. He said he expected that the front brakeman would remain on the locomotive until it stopped at the north end of the siding. As the locomotive and cut of cars proceeded northward over the auxiliary track the engineer, the fireman, the pilot conductor, and the front brakeman were in the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit. The front brakeman had

instructed the engine crew regarding the intended movements and the engineer said that he understood the instructions. As the locomotive passed the crossover near the station the front brakeman alighted to line the crossover switches.

The pilot conductor said that he was unfamiliar with the designation of the N Y C tracks and that when the movement stopped at the north end of the siding he asked the engineer if the most easterly track, track No 2, was the siding. He said that the engineer replied that it was. He said that since he was unfamiliar with the operation of N Y C telephones he first asked the engineer and then the fireman to go to the telephone to obtain permission to occupy the main tracks, and that both refused to go. He said that he asked the engineer for a switch key and the engineer said that he did not have one. He then asked the fireman who gave him a key. The pilot conductor proceeded to the telephone booth. He observed that the ring for the operator at Himrods Jct was posted on the wall of the booth. He said that the operator at Himrods Jct replied but since he was unaware that it was necessary to operate the pushbutton when speaking the operator could not hear him. He said that he heard a voice which he assumed was the operator's giving him permission to cross the main tracks. He then lined the north switch of the siding and the switches of the crossover near the north end of the siding for movement from the siding to track No 2, which he thought was the siding. The locomotive and the cut of 19 cars then proceeded northward to track No 2. The pilot conductor lined the crossover switch for movement on track No 2 and as the locomotive and cut of cars proceeded southward he observed the headlight of Extra 1079 North approaching. He said that he immediately gave stop signals. He estimated that the speed of the locomotive and cut of cars was about 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

Both the engineer and the fireman said they assumed that the pilot conductor was qualified for operation on the N Y C. They said that the pilot conductor did not ask them to go to the telephone when the movement stopped at the north end of the siding. The engineer said that when he observed the pilot conductor lining the switches for entry to track No 2 after telephoning he assumed that the pilot conductor had received instructions to operate over track No 2. Both the engineer and the fireman said that they did not observe the pilot conductor giving stop signals as the locomotive and cut of cars proceeded southward on track No 2. They said that when they observed the headlight of Extra 1079 North approaching the engineer immediately initiated a brake application. They said that the train was stopped or about stopped when the collision occurred.

The operator at GY Tower said that he heard the pilot conductor ring the operator at Himrods Jct. He said he was aware that the pilot conductor was not operating the telephone properly since his voice could not be heard. He instructed the pilot conductor to operate the pushbutton when speaking. The pilot conductor apparently did not understand the instructions. The operator at GY said that he then instructed the pilot conductor to move the locomotive southward on track No 1 to the station at Himrods Jct.

As Extra 1079 North was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed of the train was 32 miles per hour as indicated by the tape of the speed-recording device. The engine-men and the front brakeman were in the control compartment of the first diesel-electric unit, and the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The headlight was lighted brightly. The manual



block signal at Himrods Jct indicated Proceed. The engineer said that he first observed the locomotive and cut of cars when they were about 900 feet distant. He immediately initiated an emergency application of the brakes. The speed of the train was reduced to 26 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

Under the rules both the conductor and engineer are responsible for the safety of their train, and, in manual block territory, a train or engine must not cross from one main track to another without permission from the operator. In the instant case the conductor permitted an unqualified pilot conductor to supervise switching operations, and the engineer failed to determine whether or not the operator had authorized the movement of the locomotive and cut of cars from the siding to track No. 2.

#### **Cause**

This accident was caused by a locomotive with cars occupying a main track without authority.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this nineteenth day of May, 1958.

By the Commission, Commissioner Tuggle

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,

Secretary