

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2716
THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO & ST. LOUIS
RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR ALBANY, IND., ON

AUGUST 3, 1943

SUMMARY

Railroad: New York, Chicago & St. Louis
Date: August 3, 1943
Location: Albany, Ind.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: Second 68 : 53
Engine numbers: 717 : 382
Consist: 52 cars, caboose : 15 cars, caboose
Estimated speed: 35 m. p. h. : 25 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; tangent; 0.17 percent
ascending grade eastward
Weather: Cloudy
Time: About 6:45 p. m.
Casualties: 2 killed; 7 injured
Cause: Failure to obey time order
Recommendation: That the New York, Chicago &
St. Louis Railroad Company
establish an adequate block
system on the line on which
this accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2716

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

THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO & ST. LOUIS RAILROAD COMPANY

September 3, 1943.

Accident near Albany, Ind., on August 3, 1943, caused by
failure to obey time order.

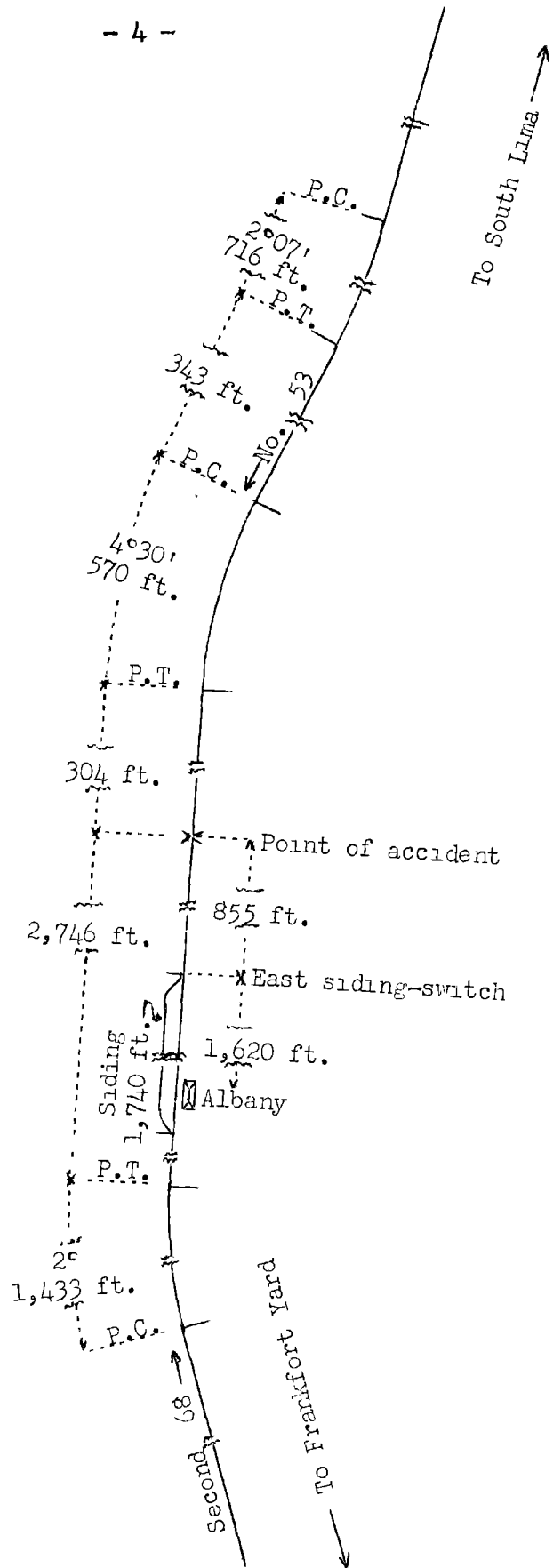
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 3, 1943, there was a head-end collision between two freight trains on the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad near Albany, Ind., which resulted in the death of two employees and the injury of seven employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Indiana Public Service Commission.

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 South Lima, Ohio
55.50 mi.
- o Portland, Ind.
10.90 mi.
- o Red Key
4.60 mi.
- o Hiles
0.73 mi.
- X Point of accident
0.47 mi.
- o Albany
11.20 mi.
- o Tuncie
2.50 mi.
- o Vernon
158.50 mi.
- o Frankfort Yard, Ind.



Inv-2716
 New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad
 Albany, Ind.
 August 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Sandusky Division extending between Frankfort Yard, Ind., and South Lima, Ohio, 144.4 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a single-track line over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. At Albany a siding 1,740 feet in length paralleled the main track on the north. The east switch of this siding was 1,620 feet east of the station. The accident occurred 855 feet east of the east siding-switch. As the vicinity was approached from the west there was a 2° curve to the right 1,433 feet in length, followed by a tangent 2,746 feet to the point of accident. As the vicinity was approached from the east there were, in succession, a 2°07' curve to the right 716 feet in length, a tangent 343 feet, a 4°30' curve to the left 570 feet and a tangent 504 feet to the point of accident. At the point of accident the grade was 0.17 percent ascending eastward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

14. Engine and Motor Whistle Signals.

* * *

SOUND.

INDICATION.

* * *

(n) — — o

Approaching meeting points. See Rule S-90.

* * *

72. * * *

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

S-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.

* * *

S-90. * * *

Trains must stop clear of the switch used by the train to be met in going on the siding.

The engineman will give signal 14 (n) at least one mile before reaching * * * a point where by train order the train is to * * * wait for an opposing train. Should the engineman fail to give signal 14 (n) as herein prescribed, the conductor must take immediate action to stop the train.

NOTE.--On trains of five or more cars, the conductor may delegate the need brakeman to take necessary action.

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

* * *

E.

Time Orders.

* * *

(3.) No 1 wait at H until 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. * * *

Time-table special instructions read in part as follows:

Eastbound trains are superior to trains of the same class in the opposite direction.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains was 50 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

At Vernon, 13.7 miles west of Albany, the crew of Second 68, an east-bound second-class freight train, received a clearance card and copies of train order No. 113 reading in part as follows:

Second 2nd six eight 68 eng 717
wait at Albany until six five five
6.55 Pm for No five three 53 eng 382.

* * *

Second 68, consisting of engine 717, 52 cars and a caboose, departed from Vernon at 6:03 p. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, 6 hours 24 minutes late, passed Muncie, 11.2 miles west of Albany and the last open office, at 6:20 p. m., passed the east siding-switch at Albany about 6:45 p. m., where it was required to wait until 6:55 p. m. unless No. 53 was into clear, and while moving at an estimated speed of 35 miles per hour it collided with No. 53.

At Portland, 16.7 miles east of Albany, the crew of No. 53, a west-bound second-class freight train, received a

clearance card and, among others, copies of train order No. 115. This train, consisting of engine 582, 15 cars and a co-boost, departed from Portland at 5:55 p. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, 5 hours 21 minutes late, departed from Red Key, 5.8 miles east of Albany and the last open office, at 6:36 p. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 25 miles per hour it collided with Second 68.

The air brakes of each train had been tested and functioned properly.

From an engine moving in either direction in the vicinity of the point of accident, the view of an engine approaching from the opposite direction was restricted to about 300 feet, because of an embankment and vegetation on the west side of the track, and track curvature.

The force of impact moved engine 382 backward 155 feet. Both engines were derailed, and stopped upright, badly damaged and in line with the track. The first 14 cars of Second 68 and the first 6 cars of No. 53 were derailed. Of these cars, 12 were destroyed and the remainder were badly damaged.

It was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6:45 p. m.

The fireman of Second 68 and the swing brakeman of No. 53 were killed. The engineer and the front brakeman of Second 68, and the engineer, the fireman, the conductor, the front brakeman and the flagman of No. 53 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 29 trains.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that at a point where a superior train is required to wait for an opposing train the superior train must stop clear of the switch to be used by the inferior train to enter the siding. The engineer of each train must sound the meeting-point whistle signal not less than 1 mile before the train reaches a waiting point.

The crew of each train held copies of train order No. 115, which required Second 68, an east-bound second-class train, not to pass the fouling point of the east siding-switch

at Albany prior to 6:55 p. m. unless No. 53, a west-bound second-class train, was into clear on the siding. Second 68 passed the east siding-switch at Albany about 6:45 p. m. and collided with No. 53 at a point 855 feet east of the switch.

As No. 53 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 40 miles per hour. The engine-men, the front brakeman and the swing brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead from the engine cab. When the engine reached a point about 1,500 feet west of the east siding-switch, the engineer made a service brake-pipe reduction to control the speed of the train to enter the siding. Soon afterward, the fireman and the front brakeman, who were on the left side of the engine, saw the approaching train and called a warning, and the collision occurred almost immediately.

About 45 minutes before the accident occurred the crew of Second 68 received copies of train order No. 113 at Vernon, 13.7 miles west of Albany. The conductor, the flagman, the engineer and the front brakeman said they read the order and understood that their train was required not to pass the fouling point of the east siding-switch at Albany prior to 6:55 p. m., unless No. 53 was into clear on the siding. As Second 68 was approaching Albany the speed was about 50 miles per hour. The engine-men and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead. When the engine reached a point about 1 mile west of Albany the engineer sounded the meeting-point signal, closed the throttle and made a service brake-pipe reduction. When the engine was in the vicinity of the train-order signal the speed was about 35 miles per hour and he observed that this signal displayed proceed. Then he became confused about the requirements of train order No. 113, and momentarily thought the waiting point was Niles, the next station east of Albany, and he moved the brake valve to release position and opened the throttle. When the engine was in the vicinity of the east siding-switch the front brakeman called a warning and the engineer immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position and closed the throttle. He estimated the speed of his train as 35 miles per hour when the collision occurred. The front brakeman said that he and the fireman warned the engineer of the provisions of order No. 113 when the engine was about 1 mile west of Albany and again warned him when the engine was in the vicinity of the west siding-switch. The engineer did not take action to control the speed of the train until after the engine had passed the east siding-switch. The conductor and the flagman said they were on the rear platform of the caboose and they were expecting the engineer to stop clear of the east siding-switch

if No. 53 was not into clear on the siding. When the cabooses reached a point where they could see that No. 53 was not on the siding the air brakes of their train became applied in emergency, and the collision occurred almost immediately.

The carrier's book of operating rules contains manual-block rules which provide for blocking of opposing movements, but these rules were not in effect on the territory involved. In the instant case, if an adequate block system had been in use, the crew of Second 68 would have received definite information that their train was required to stop short of the clearance point of the east siding-switch, and this accident would have been averted.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey a time order.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad Company establish an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this third day of September, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.