

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2787  
THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS  
RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT YELLOW CREEK, OHIO, ON  
MARCH 27, 1944

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: New York, Chicago and St. Louis  
Date: March 27, 1944  
Location: Yellow Creek, Ohio  
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision  
Trains involved: Passenger : Freight  
Train numbers: Passenger Extra : First 52  
619 East  
Engine numbers: 619 : 726  
Consist: 15 cars : 66 cars, caboose  
Speed: Standing ; 20 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable and train orders  
Track: Single; tangent; 0.057 percent  
descending grade eastward  
Weather: Raining  
Time: 2:20 a. m.  
Casualties: 1 killed; 22 injured  
Cause: Failure to provide adequate  
protection for preceding train  
Recommendation: That the New York, Chicago and  
St. Louis Railroad Company  
establish an adequate block  
system on the line on which  
this accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2787

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

THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS RAILROAD COMPANY

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April 28, 1944.

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Accident at Yellow Creek, Ohio, on March 27, 1944, caused  
by failure to provide adequate protection for the  
preceding train.

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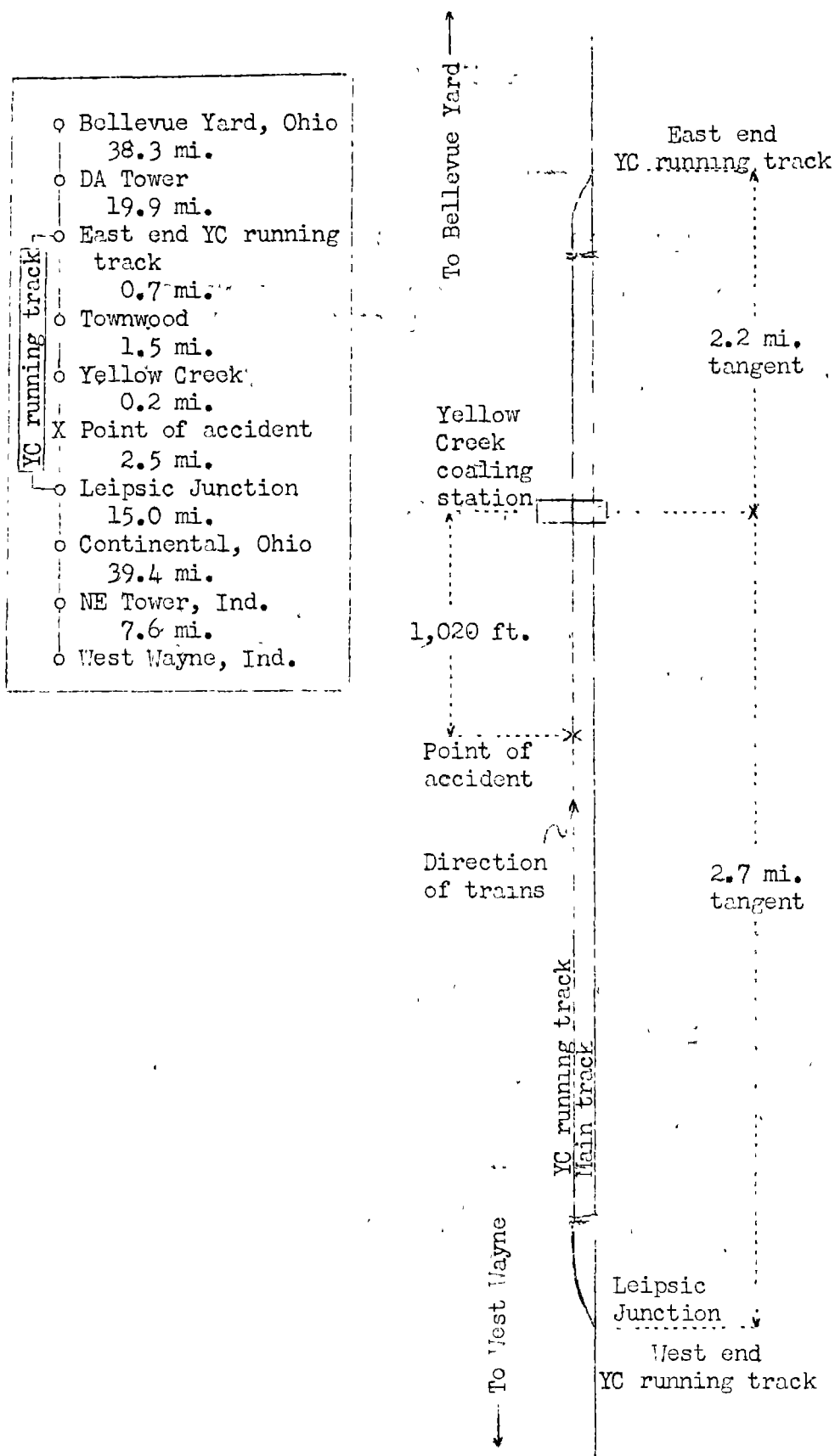
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On March 27, 1944, there was a rear-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad at Yellow Creek, Ohio, which resulted in the death of 1 train-service employee, and the injury of 15 passengers, 3 Pullman employees and 4 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 Chairman Patterson for consideration and disposition.



Inv. No. 2787  
New York, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad  
Yellow Creek, Ohio  
March 27, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the railroad designated as the Ft. Wayne Division and extending eastward from West Wayne, Ind., to Bellevue Yard, Ohio, 125.1 miles. This was a single-track line eastward from NE Tower, Ind., 7.6 miles east of West Wayne, to DA Tower, Ohio, 79.2 miles. An auxiliary track, 4.9 miles long and designated as YC running track, paralleled the main track on the north and extended eastward from Leipsic Junction, Ohio, 54.4 miles east of NE Tower, to a point 0.7 mile east of Townwood, Ohio. Trains were operated on the main track by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system, and on YC running track by timetable and train orders only. At Yellow Creek, 2.7 miles east of Leipsic Junction, an overhead coaling station spanned the main track and YC running track. The accident occurred on YC running track 1,020 feet west of the coaling station at Yellow Creek. The main track and YC running track were tangent throughout a distance of 2.7 miles west of Yellow Creek and 2.2 miles eastward. The grade for east-bound trains was 0.057 percent descending 4,414 feet to the point of accident and 1,186 feet beyond.

DEFINITIONS.

\* \* \*

REDUCED SPEED.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or switch not properly lined. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

Operating rules read in part as follows:

11. A train finding a fusee burning red on or near its track must stop and extinguish the fusee, and then proceed at reduced speed.

A train finding a fusee burning yellow on or near its track will proceed at reduced speed, without stopping.

\* \* \*

35. The following signals will be used by flagmen:

\* \* \*

Night signals--A red light, Torpedoes and Fusees.

85. \* \* \* Extra trains may pass and run ahead of second and third class trains and extra trains.

\* \* \*

91. Unless some form of block system is used, trains in the same direction must keep not less than five minutes apart, except in closing up at stations. A train following a train carrying passengers must keep not less than ten minutes behind it.

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, placing two torpedoes, and when necessary, in addition, displaying lighted fusees. When recalled and safety to the train will permit, he may return.

\* \* \*

When a train is moving under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must take such action as may be necessary to insure full protection. By night, \* \* \*, lighted fusees must be thrown off at proper intervals.

\* \* \*

Time-table special instructions read in part as follows:

18. MOVEMENT OF TRAINS ON YELLOW CREEK RUNNING TRACK.

\* \* \*

(b) All Westbound trains except first-class will, unless otherwise instructed by train order, use running track to Leipsic Jct.

(c) Eastbound trains will not use YC running track unless authorized by train order.

(d) All trains and engines using YC running track will protect as per Rule 99.

\* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for the trains involved was 30 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Passenger Extra 619 East, an east-bound passenger train, consisted of engine 619, 1 baggage car, 1 Pullman sleeping car, 3 troop sleeping cars, 1 baggage-dining car, 4 Pullman tourist cars, 1 dining car and 4 Pullman tourist cars, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. At Continental, 17.7 miles west of Yellow Creek, the crew received copies of train order No. 8 reading as follows:

Psgr Exa East Eng 619 Six one nine and  
First 52 Five Two Eng 726 use YC Running  
Track Leipsic Jct to Townwood with right  
over opposing trains.

Passenger Extra 619 passed Leipsic Junction, the last open office, at 2:05 a. m., entered YC running track, and stopped at Yellow Creek at 2:17 a. m., with the rear end standing 1,020 feet west of the coaling station. About 3 minutes later the rear end was struck by First 52.

First 52, an east-bound second-class freight train, consisted of engine 726, 66 cars and a caboose. At Continental the crew received copies of train order No. 8. This train passed Leipsic Junction at 2:15 a. m., entered YC running track, and while moving at an estimated speed of 20 miles per hour it struck Passenger Extra 619 East.

The rear car of Passenger Extra 619 was badly damaged, and the remainder of the cars and the tender of the engine were slightly damaged. The tender of engine 726, the first 5 cars and the front truck of the sixth car of First 52 were derailed. The engine and the first 5 cars were badly damaged.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 2:20 a. m.

The engineer of First 52 was killed. The conductor, the front brakeman and the flagman of Passenger Extra 619, and the fireman of First 52 were injured.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement on YC running track was 7.66 trains.

### Discussion

About 3 minutes after Passenger Extra 619 East stopped at Yellow Creek the rear end was struck by First 52. As First 52 was approaching Yellow Creek the speed was about 30 miles per hour. The air brakes had functioned properly at all points where used en route. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The headlight was lighted, and there was no condition of the engine which obstructed the enginemen's view of the track ahead. It was raining but not sufficiently to affect visibility. The fireman said that no warning signal was seen or heard, and the first he knew of anything being wrong was when the engineer called his attention to lights which appeared to be the reflection of lighted marker lamps about 1,300 feet distant. Soon afterward, the engineer made a brake-pipe reduction and called a warning. The speed of First 52 was about 20 miles per hour when the fireman jumped off just prior to the collision. The engineer was killed in the accident.

The flagman of Passenger Extra 619 said that the marker lamps were burning brightly, and he dropped a lighted 5-minute yellow fusee when the rear of his train was about 500 feet east of Leipsic Junction. About 10 minutes later, after his train stopped at Yellow Creek, he was standing near the rear car when he saw the reflection of the headlight of the approaching train

about 2,500 feet distant. He gave stop signals with a lighted red lantern and a lighted white lantern. He thought the signals were answered by the engineer, as the headlight flashed off and on. Then, because it was raining, he entered the rear car, and was in this car when the collision occurred. There was an ample supply of both red and yellow 5-minute and 10-minute fuses available for use by the flagman. He was an experienced employee and understood that flag protection was required for his train when the speed was reduced for stopping at Yellow Creek, and while it was standing in the vicinity of the coaling station. However, he thought the flag protection he furnished was sufficient.

On YC running track trains were being operated by timetable and train orders only. The only provisions for spacing following trains was by the time-interval method enforced by operators at open stations, and by flagmen's signals. The rules required that a train following a passenger train be spaced at least 10 minutes behind the preceding train. In this case the preceding train passed Leipsic Junction, the last open office and 2.5 miles west of the point of accident, 10 minutes before the following train passed. However, this time-spacing method did not provide means for spacing trains except at open offices, and the collision occurred before the trains reached the east end of YC running track, 2.2 miles east of Yellow Creek, where trains enter automatic block-signal territory on the main track. Unless the following train received flagging signals, there was no provision that prevented this train from moving at the maximum authorized speed of 30 miles per hour from Leipsic Junction to the east end of YC running track.

The book of operating rules of this carrier contains manual-block rules which provide, among other requirements, that no train may be permitted to enter a block occupied by a passenger train, except in case of emergency. If the manual-block system had been in use in this territory, the following train would not have been permitted to enter a block occupied by a passenger train, and this accident would not have occurred.

#### Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the preceding train.

#### 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 twenty-eighth day of April, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.