

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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REPORT NO. 3738  
THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS  
RAILROAD COMPANY  
IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT NEW DOUGLAS, ILL., ON  
DECEMBER 6, 1956

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## SUMMARY

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Date:	December 6, 1956	
Railroad:	New York, Chicago and St. Louis	
Location:	New Douglas, Ill.	
Kind of accident:	Head-end collision	
Trains involved:	Freight	: Freight
Train numbers:	First 49	: 98
Locomotive numbers:	Diesel-electric units 482, 497, and 498	: Diesel-electric units 496, 503, and 448
Consists:	84 cars, caboose	: 85 cars, caboose
Speeds:	Undetermined	: Undetermined
Operation:	Timetable and train orders	
Track:	Single; 1° curve; 0.18 percent descending grade westward	
Weather:	Misting	
Time:	1:35 p. m.	
Casualties:	1 killed; 6 injured	
Cause:	Train proceeding beyond limits of right-of-track order and occupying main track on the time of an opposing superior train	

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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REPORT NO. 3738

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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May 20, 1957

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Accident at New Douglas, Ill., on December 6, 1956, caused by a train proceeding beyond the limits of a right-of-track order and occupying the main track on the time of an opposing superior train.

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

TUGGLE, Commissioner:

On December 6, 1956, there was a head-end collision between two freight trains on the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad at New Douglas, Ill., which resulted in the death of one train-service employee, and the injury of six train-service employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

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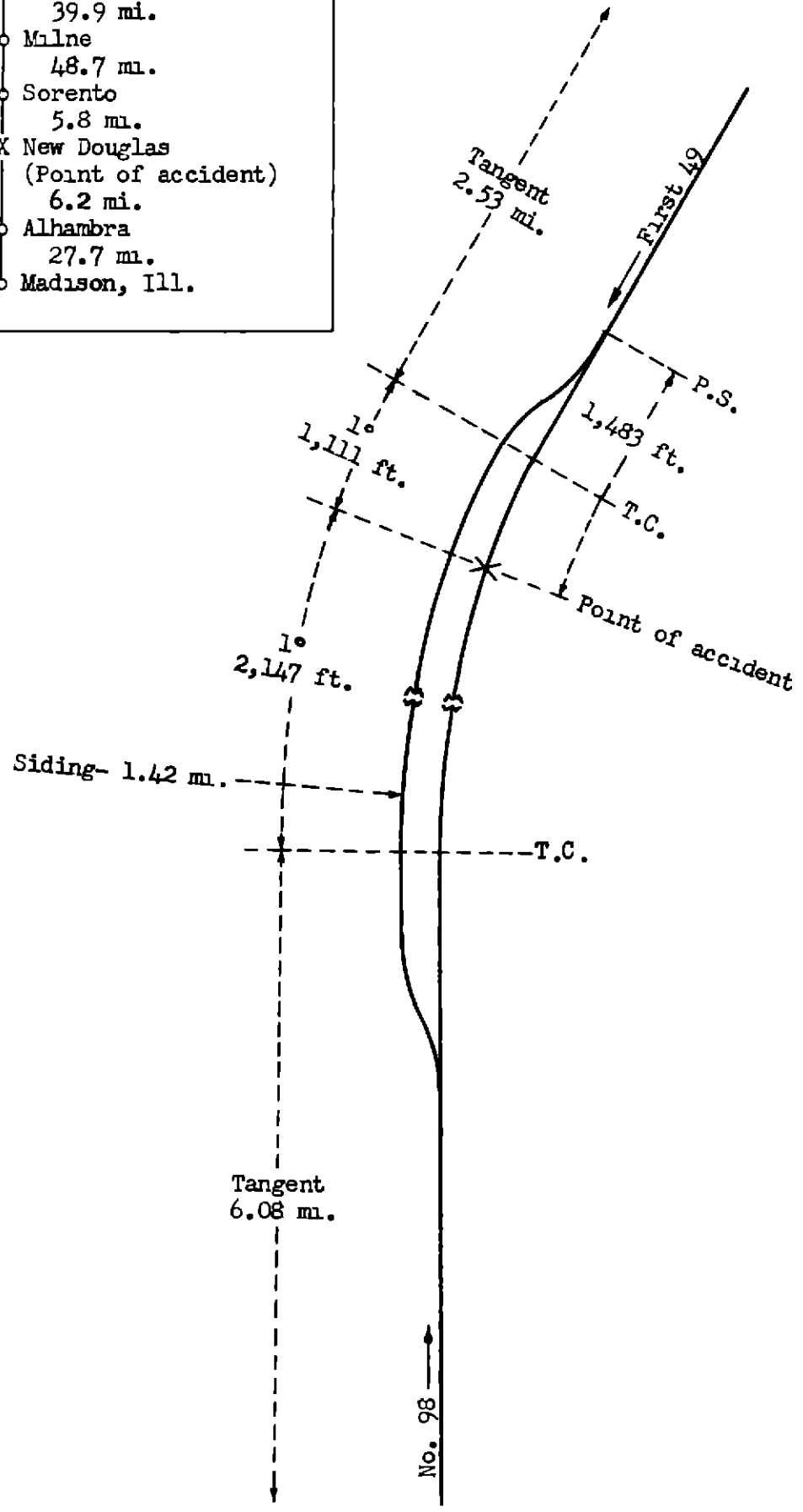
1.

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.

← To Madison

To Charleston Yard →

- Charleston Yard, Ill.  
39.9 mi.
- Milne  
48.7 mi.
- Sorento  
5.8 mi.
- X New Douglas  
(Point of accident)  
6.2 mi.
- Alhambra  
27.7 mi.
- Madison, Ill.



Report No. 3738  
The New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad  
New Douglas, Ill.  
December 6, 1957

### Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Clover Leaf District extending between Charleston Yard and Madison, Ill., 128.3 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders, and a manual block-signal system for following movements only. At New Douglas, 94.4 miles west of Charleston Yard, a siding 1.42 miles in length parallels the main track on the north. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 1,483 feet west of the east siding-switch at New Douglas. From the east there is a tangent 2.53 miles in length and a 1° curve to the left 1,111 feet to the point of accident and 2,147 feet westward. From the west there is a tangent 6.08 miles in length and the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade for west-bound trains is successively, an average of 0.21 percent descending 1,700 feet, level 700 feet, an average of 0.35 percent ascending 2,200 feet, level 300 feet, and 0.18 percent descending 240 feet to the point of accident. The grade for east-bound trains is, successively, level 3,900 feet and 0.18 percent ascending 160 feet to the point of accident.

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

#### 14. ENGINE AND MOTOR CAR WHISTLE SIGNALS.

Note. -- The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "--" for longer sounds. \* \* \*

Sound	Indication
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\* \* \*

(n) -- -- o	Approaching meeting or waiting points. See Rule S-90.
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\* \* \*

S-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.

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S-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 \* \* \*

\* \* \*

S-90. The enginemen of each train will give signal 14(n) at least one mile before reaching a meeting or waiting point.

#### FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

##### S-C

##### Giving Right Over an Opposing Train.

- (1) No. 1 one Eng. 177 has right over No. 2 two Eng. 168 D to G.

\* \* \*

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.

\* \* \*

Timetable special instructions provide that east-bound trains are superior to west-bound trains of the same class.

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains in the vicinity of the point of accident is 49 miles per hour.

#### Description of Accident

First 49, a west-bound second-class freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric units 482, 497, and 498, coupled in multiple-unit control, 84 cars, and a caboose. At Charleston Yard the crew received copies of train order No. 22 reading as follows:

First 49 four nine Eng 482 has  
right over Second 96 nine six Eng 457  
Charleston Yard to Milne right  
over No 98 nine eight Eng 496  
to New Douglas right over No 42  
four two to Madison

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Milne is 39.9 miles west of Charleston Yard. This train departed from Charleston Yard at 11:24 a. m., 3 hours 54 minutes late, and passed Sorento, 5.8 miles east of New Douglas, the last open office, at 1:26 p. m., 3 hours 34 minutes late. It passed the east siding-switch at New Douglas, where it was required to enter the siding to meet No. 98, and while moving at an undetermined speed it collided with No. 98. The accident occurred 1,483 feet west of the switch.

No. 98, an east-bound second-class freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric units 496, 503, and 448, coupled in multiple-unit control, 85 cars, and a caboose. At Madison the members of the crew received copies of train order No. 22. The train departed from Madison at 12:40 p. m., 2 hours 10 minutes late, passed Alhambra, 6.2 miles west of New Douglas, the last open office, at 1:25 p. m., 2 hours 9 minutes late, and while moving at an undetermined speed it collided with First 49.

The locomotive, the first 10 cars, the twenty-second to the thirty-eighth cars, inclusive, and the fifty-third car of First 49, and the locomotive and the first 4 cars of No. 98 were derailed. The first and second Diesel-electric units of No. 98 stopped upright and approximately in line with the track. The third unit stopped upright with the front end 25 feet south of the track and the rear end on the track structure. The first Diesel-electric unit of First 49 sheared the superstructure from the first Diesel-electric unit of No. 98 and stopped on top of the second Diesel-electric unit of No. 98. The second Diesel-electric unit of First 49 stopped upright on the north side of the track and approximately parallel to it. The third unit stopped on its side with the front end on the track structure and the rear end about 30 feet south of the track. The derailed cars stopped in various positions on or near the track. Inflammable material in the wreckage became ignited, and equipment which had been damaged in the collision was further damaged by fire. The Diesel-electric units were badly damaged, 18 cars were destroyed, 9 cars were badly damaged, and 5 cars were somewhat damaged.

The fireman of First 49 was killed. The engineer, the front brakeman, and the flagman of First 49, and the engineer, the fireman, and the front brakeman of No. 98 were injured.

It was misting at the time of the accident, which occurred about 1:35 p. m.

The locomotive units of both trains were of the road-switcher type.

Discussion

The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 22, which gave First 49 right over No. 98 Charleston Yard to New Douglas. No. 98, the superior train by direction, was due to leave New Douglas before First 49 reached that point, and under the provisions of this order First 49 was required to take the siding at New Douglas to meet No. 98. The members of the crews of both trains so understood.

As First 49 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen and the front brakeman were in their respective positions in the control compartment of the first Diesel-electric unit. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The headlight was lighted. The surviving members of the crew said that they had discussed train order No. 22 before leaving Charleston Yard and at various times after leaving that point, and they all understood that their train was to take the siding at New Douglas if they met No. 98 at that station. It was misting as the train approached New Douglas, and the members of the train crew said their range of vision was restricted to approximately the length of their train. The front brakeman said that he did not realize that the train was closely approaching New Douglas until he saw an elevator located approximately 200 feet west of the east siding-switch. At this time the locomotive had passed the switch. When he saw the elevator he called a warning, and he said that the fireman then called that he saw No. 98 ahead. The front brakeman alighted from the locomotive immediately, and he did not know what action was taken by the engineer. He could not recall whether he had heard the engineer sound the horn in the vicinity of New Douglas. The engineer said that he could remember sounding the horn for rail-highway grade crossings at Sorento and he remembered passing a railroad crossing at this point, but he could remember no details of the trip between Sorento and New Douglas nor of the collision. The conductor and the flagman said that they could not hear the sound of the locomotive horn from the caboose. They said they did not realize that the train was closely approaching New Douglas until the locomotive was closely approaching the east siding-switch. When they became aware of their location the conductor immediately opened the conductor's valve. According to the tape of the speed-recording device, the speed was approximately 50 miles per hour when the brakes became applied. The speed at the time of the collision could not be definitely determined. At the time of the accident the engineer had been on duty approximately 3 hours 15 minutes after having been off duty more than 24 hours. He could remember the details of the trip prior to the time the train passed Sorento, but he could not account for the fact that



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he could remember no events which occurred after that time. The front brakeman said that he noticed nothing unusual in the actions of the engineer during the trip, and that as the train approached New Douglas the engineer was seated in his usual position in the control compartment.

As No. 98 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen and the front brakeman were in the control compartment of the first Diesel-electric unit. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The headlight was lighted. The engineer said that he first saw First 49 approaching at a distance which he thought was about 1,500 feet. At this time he had reduced the speed of his train to about 20 miles per hour preparatory to stopping at the east end of the siding. When he saw that First 49 was passing the east siding-switch he called a warning and made an emergency application of the brakes. All of the employees on the locomotive alighted before the collision occurred, and none of them could estimate the speed at the time of the collision. The conductor and the flagman thought that the train was stopped by the emergency application of the brakes, and at that time they were unaware that a collision had occurred.

#### Cause

This accident was caused by a train proceeding beyond the limits of a right-of-track order and occupying the main track on the time of an opposing superior train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twentieth day of May, 1957.

By the Commission, Commissioner Tuggle.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,

Secretary.