

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2932
NEW YORK, ONTARIO AND WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT NORWICH, N. Y., ON
SEPTEMBER 17, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: New York, Ontario and Western
Date: September 17, 1945
Location: Norwich, N. Y.
Kind of accident: Side collision
Trains involved: Freight : Yard engine
Train number: Extra 803 North :
Engine numbers: Diesel-electric : 50
units 803-803B-
804B-804
Consist: 81 cars, caboose : 12 cars, 2
caboosees
Estimated speed: 12 m. p. h. : Standing
Operation: Timetable, train orders and
automatic block-signal system;
yard limits
Track: Single; 3° curve; level
Weather: Raining
Time: 10:35 p. m.
Casualties: 2 killed
Cause: Failure properly to control speed
of train moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2932

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

NEW YORK, ONTARIO AND WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

October 24, 1945.

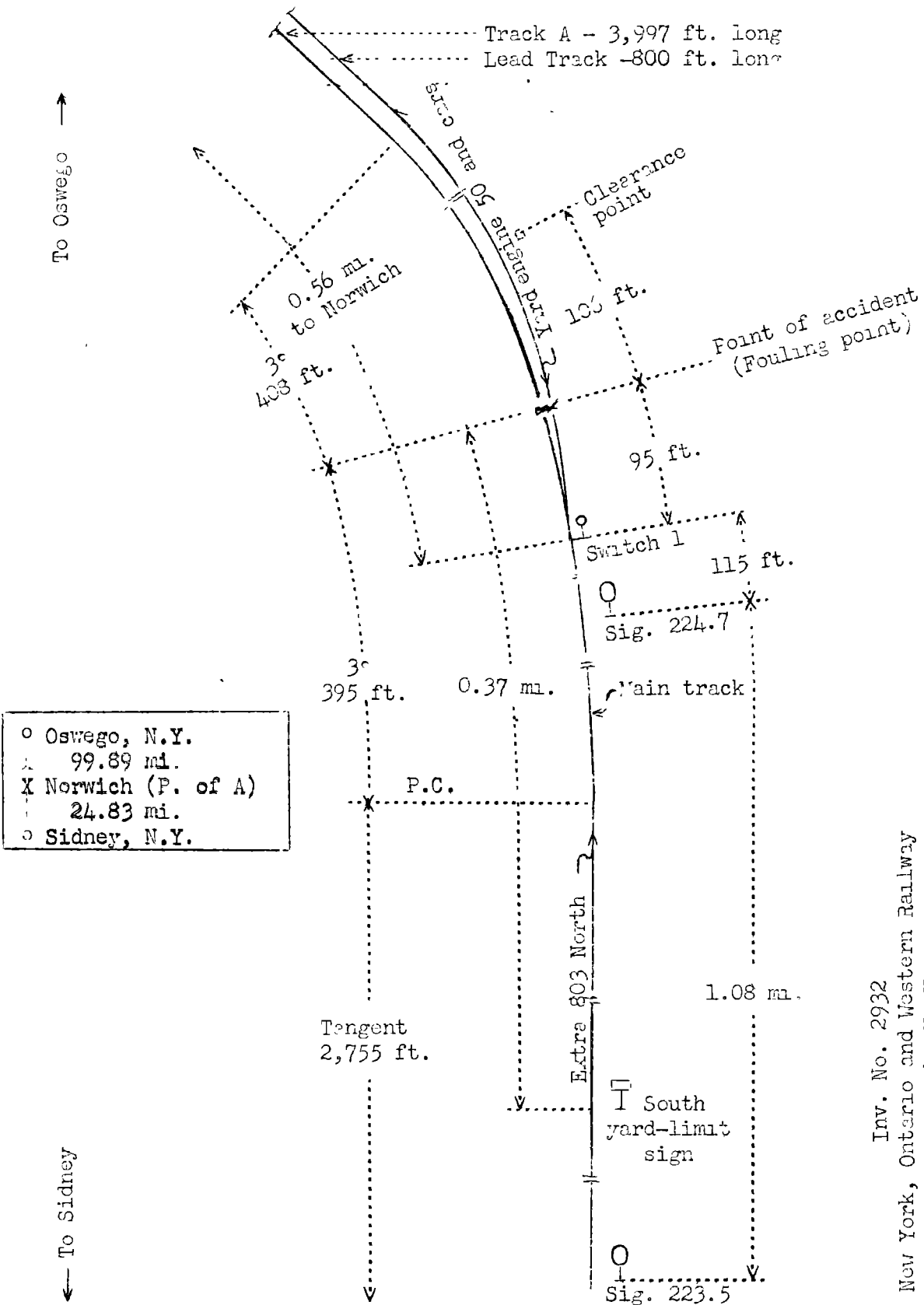
Accident at Norwich, N. Y., on September 17, 1945, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of a train
moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On September 17, 1945, there was a side collision between a freight train and a yard engine with cars on the New York, Ontario and Western Railway at Norwich, N. Y., which resulted in the death of two employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the New York 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.



Inv. No. 2932
New York, Ontario and Western Railway
Norwich, N. Y.
September 17, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on the Northern District, which extends between Sidney and Oswego, N. Y., 124.72 miles, a single-track line in the vicinity of the point of accident, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. Within yard limits at Norwich, 24.83 miles north of Sidney, the main track throughout a distance of 3,997 feet immediately north of switch 1, located 0.56 mile south of the station and 0.37 mile north of the south yard-limit sign, is designated as track A. Entry to the south end of a lead track about 800 feet long, which connects the main track and the south ends of the tracks of a freight classification yard, located to the east of track A, is made through switch 1. The clearance point at the south end of the lead track is 201 feet north of switch 1, and is designated by a sign located 13.5 feet east of the east rail of the lead track. The accident occurred at the fouling point of track A and the turnout of switch 1, at a point 106 feet south of the clearance point and 95 feet north of the switch. From the south on the main track, there is a tangent 2,755 feet in length, which is followed by a 3° curve to the left 300 feet to switch 1, and beyond this switch on track A there is a 3° curve to the left 95 feet to the point of accident and 408 feet northward. The grade is practically level.

Automatic signals 223.5 and 224.7, governing north-bound movements on the main track and track A, are, respectively, 1.1 miles and 115 feet south of switch 1. Signal 223.5 is of the three-indication, color-light type, and signal 224.7 is of the two-indication, color-light type. These signals are continuously lighted. The involved aspects and corresponding indications and names of these signals are as follows:

<u>Signal</u>	<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
223.5	Green	Proceed.	Clear signal.
224.7)	Yellow	Proceed with	Caution signal.
)		caution * * *	
)	Red	Stop.	Stop signal.

The track circuit of the fouling section of the turnout of switch 1 extends 178 feet north of the switch. The normal position of switch 1 is for movement on the main track and track A. The controlling circuits of the automatic signals are so arranged that when the block immediately north of signal 224.7 and the fouling section of the turnout of switch 1 are unoccupied and switch 1 is in normal position, signal 223.5 will display proceed and signal 224.7 will display proceed-with-caution. When either the block immediately north of signal 224.7 or the fouling section of the turnout of switch 1 is occupied, or switch 1 is lined for entry to the lead track, signal 223.5 will display proceed-with-caution and signal 224.7 will display stop. The switch-stand of switch 1 is on the east side of the main track,

and is of the hand-throw intermediate stand type. It is provided with two targets and a switch lamp. The centers of the targets are 3 feet 6-1/2 inches above the tops of the ties, and the centers of the lenses of the switch lamp are 2 feet 5-1/2 inches above the targets. When the switch is lined normally a green and white circular target at right angles to the track and a green light are displayed. When the switch is lined for entry to the lead track a red arrow-shaped target at right angles to the track and a red light are displayed.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Yard Speed.--A speed that will permit stopping within one-half the range of vision.

93. * * *

Second class, extra trains and engines must move within yard limits at yard speed unless the main track is known to be clear.

Description of Accident

Yard engine 50, headed northward but moving southward, was pulling a cut of 12 cars and 2 cabooses, in the order named. This movement stopped on the lead track about 10:35 p. m., with the engine on the turnout of switch 1, at a point 106 feet south of the clearance point and 95 feet north of the switch. Immediately afterward it was struck by Extra 803 North.

Extra 803 North, a north-bound freight train, consisting of Diesel-electric units 803, 803B, 804B and 804, 81 cars and a caboose, in the order named, departed from Sidney, the last open office, at 9:27 p. m., passed signal 223.5, which displayed proceed, passed the south yard-limit sign at Norwich, passed signal 224.7, which displayed stop, entered track A at switch 1, and while moving at an estimated speed of 12 miles per hour it struck yard engine 50.

The force of the impact overturned engine 50 to the right. The rear of the tender and the right side of the engine cab were crushed inward. The first and second units and the front truck of the third unit of the engine of Extra 803 were derailed. The front end of the first unit was considerably damaged.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 10:35 p. m.

The engineer and the fireman of yard engine 50 were killed.

Discussion

Immediately prior to the accident, yard engine 50 was performing switching service in the vicinity of the south end of the freight classification yard at Norwich. This engine, loaded northward but moving southward, pulled a cut of 12 cars and 2 cabooses from one of the yard tracks and had entered the lead track to switch these cars to other yard tracks. The movement had just stopped, with the engine standing on the turnout of switch 1 when it was struck by Extra 803 North at the fouling point of the turnout and track A. When the accident occurred the conductor and the brakeman of the yard engine were in the vicinity of the north end of the cut of cars. These employees were not aware of anything being wrong until the collision occurred. The engineer and the fireman of engine 50 were killed in the accident, therefore, it could not be determined when they first became aware that Extra 803 was approaching.

As Extra 803 North was approaching Norwich the speed was about 20 miles per hour. The brakes had functioned properly at all points where used en route. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the engineer, the front brakeman and a road foreman of engines were maintaining a lookout ahead from the control compartment of the first unit. The engineer was operating the engine. The fireman was in the third unit. Signal 223.5 displayed proceed, and the employees in the control compartment called the indication. When the engine was in the vicinity of the south yard-limit sign the speed of the train was about 15 miles per hour, and this speed was maintained until the engine reached a point about 450 feet south of signal 224.7, which displayed proceed-with-caution. Then the indication of this signal changed to stop, and the engineer immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, in an attempt to stop the train short of the signal. However, the train was not stopped and the speed was about 12 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The accident occurred within yard limits, and, under the rules, Extra 803 was required to be operated in this territory in such manner that it could be stopped within a distance of one-half the range of vision.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of a train moving within yard limits.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-fourth day of October, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.