

Inv-2274

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR  
BUREAU OF SAFETY

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ACCIDENT ON THE  
PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

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KIMBOLTON, OHIO

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JUNE 7, 1938.

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2274

SUMMARY

Inv-2274

Railroad: Pennsylvania  
Date: June 7, 1938  
Location: Kimbolton, Ohio  
Kind of accident: Derailment  
Train involved: Freight  
Train number: Extra 7630  
Engine numbers: 7630-7676  
Consist: 2 engines, 48 cars, 2 cabooses  
Speed: 25 m.p.h.  
Operation: Timetable, train orders, manual  
block-signal system  
Track: Single-track, 3°07' left curve;  
practically level  
Weather: Cloudy  
Time: 2:40 p.m.  
Casualties: 5 injured  
Cause: Open switch

June 27, 1938.

To the Commission:

On June 7, 1938, there was a derailment of a freight train on the Pennsylvania Railroad at Kimbolton, Ohio, which resulted in the injury of one live stock caretaker and four employees.

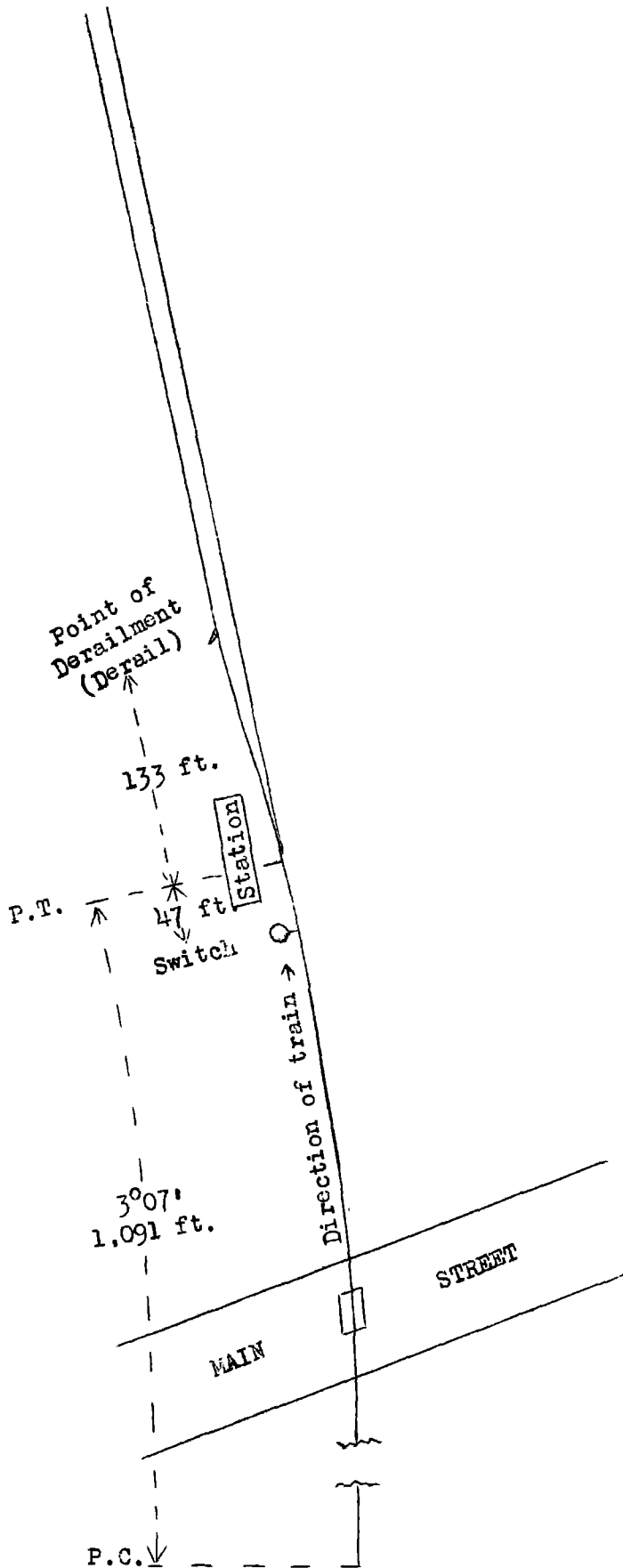
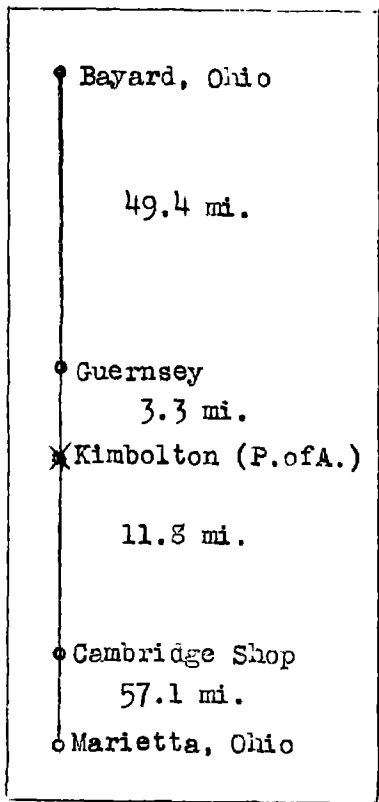
#### Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Cleveland Division extending between Marietta and Bayard, Ohio, a distance of 127.6 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. Timetable directions are used in this report. The derailment occurred at a derailing device located 180 feet north of the facing-point switch leading to the side track at Kimbolton. Approaching from the south the track is tangent for 1,371 feet, followed by a  $3^{\circ}07'$  left curve 1,091 feet long; the switch is located on this curve at a point 47 feet from its northern end. The grade is 0.38 percent ascending northward for 1,230 feet to within 325 feet of the switch, then it is practically level to and beyond the derail location.

The side track is about 715 feet long and parallels the main track on the west. The switchstand is of the New Century low type, and is located on the west side of the track  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the center of the main track; it is equipped with 10-inch enameled targets and 5-inch lenses, showing white when the switch is lined for the main track and red when it is lined for the siding. The targets were in good condition. The turnout is No. 10. The double-end derailing device involved is hand operated; it is not connected with the switch.

The station at Kimbolton is west of the track, its south end being  $18\frac{1}{2}$  feet north of the switch. A tool house, which provides storage room for a track-car, is located in the station building, the tool house door being 26 feet north of the switchstand. There is no filling or planking between the rails to facilitate the removal of a track-car to the tool house.

On account of the curve and buildings located on the west side of the track, the view of the switchstand across the inside of the curve from the fireman's side of the engine cab is restricted to 600 feet; the view from the engineman's side around the outside of the curve is entirely obstructed. The speed limit for freight trains is 30 miles per hour.



Inv. No. 2274  
 Pennsylvania R. R.,  
 Kimbolton, Ohio,  
 June 7, 1938.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 2:40 p.m.

#### Description

Extra 7630, a north-bound freight train, consisted of 31 loaded cars, 17 empties, 1 deadhead caboose and 1 service caboose, hauled by engines 7630 and 7676, and was in charge of Conductor Nicholson and Enginemen Gaumer and McPeck, respectively. This train left Cambridge Shop at 2 p.m., according to the train sheet, and at Kimbolton, 11.8 miles beyond, it entered an open siding-switch and was derailed at the derailing device on the siding while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 20 to 25 miles per hour. This siding had last been used by Track Supervisor Zearley in charge of track motorcar 6394.

Both engines were derailed but remained coupled, and stopped practically upright on the roadbed; 16 cars were derailed. The main track was damaged for about 100 feet and the siding for about 300 feet. The employees injured were the lead engineman, both firemen and the head brakeman.

#### Summary of evidence

Track Supervisor Zearley, a qualified track-car driver, stated that he had an order to go to Guernsey, on one-man track car 6394, which was completed about 9:43 a.m. He departed from Cambridge Shop, stopped at Kimbolton to pick up a pair of fence stretchers and started for Guernsey. Before reaching the tunnel, located about 1.55 miles south of Guernsey, the motor stopped, and as he was unable to restart it he pushed it back to Kimbolton and stopped on the main track opposite the tool room in the station. He attempted to move the car from the track to the tool room but due to the fact that there was no planking or filling material between the rails he was unable to do so. He then pushed the car beyond the siding-switch, opened the switch and pushed the car northward on the side track as far as the derail. He then telephoned the operator at Newcomerstown and had his order annulled; this was about 11 a.m. He also telephoned for a motor repairman, after which he went to the tool house to take shelter from a heavy rainfall. The repairman arrived in about an hour, cleaned a spark plug and started the motor, but as it was still raining Mr. Zearley decided to return to Cambridge in the repairman's automobile. The two men then pushed the track-car southward on the side track till it was opposite the tool room and lifted it off the track without going to the switch. They then got into the automobile, which was parked north of the station, and departed. Although he thought he had closed the switch, he accepted the fact that it was open, as evidence that he had not done so, and he could not recall having gone back to the switch and moving the switch lever. He did not see anyone else around Kimbolton, except the repairman

and himself.

Mr. Porter, Maintainer, Maintenance-of-Way Equipment, stated that he left Cambridge Shop about 1 p.m. and returned 1:45 p.m. While he was at Kimbolton he did not notice the position of the switch at any time, nor did he have any conversation with Mr. Zearley about it. However, sometime after 2 p.m., Mr. Zearley came into the shop at New Cambridge and asked him whether or not he had noticed if the track supervisor had put the lock in the switch. Mr. Porter's answer was "No".

Fireman Murphy stated that while moving around the left curve at Kimbolton at a speed of about 30 miles per hour, he was on the left seat box of engine 7630 and Head Brakeman Staats was sitting ahead of him. When they were about four car lengths from the switch, he saw the red indication displayed by the switch target and lamp, and called a warning to Engineman Gaumer, who immediately applied the air brakes in emergency. The train entered the open switch and was derailed when it encountered the derailing device on the side track. After the accident he observed that the switch was open and was displaying a red indication. The switch lock was lying on the tie.

Head Brakeman Staats' statement regarding events up to the time of derailment agreed with that of Fireman Murphy. The head brakeman did not examine the switch after the accident.

Engineman Gaumer, of lead engine 7630, stated that an air-brake test was made at Cambridge and the brakes operated satisfactorily en route. As he was on the outside of the curve, he could not see the switch target and was not aware of anything wrong until he received a warning from one of the men on the left side of the engine. He immediately applied the air brakes in emergency. At that time the speed was 25 miles per hour or slightly more.

Conductor Nicholson and Flagman Cunningham were in the caboose when the accident occurred. After the train stopped, the conductor went forward and found the switch open and a red indication displayed; the switch lever was in the keeper but was not latched.

Captain of Railroad Police Fasolas arrived at the scene of the accident shortly after 6 p.m. Inspection of the switch and its appurtenances failed to disclose any indication of tampering. The following morning, in company with another officer, he interviewed several nearby residents, and learned that the only persons these residents had seen in the immediate vicinity of the switch on the day of the accident were the track supervisor and the track-car motor repairman.

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## Discussion

The investigation disclosed that at about 11 a.m. on the morning of the accident Track Supervisor Zearley lined the siding-switch for entry to the siding in order to place his disabled motorcar on the siding for the purpose of having it repaired. About 1:30 p.m., after the repairs had been made, the supervisor and the repairman removed the motorcar to the station tool house, and returned to Cambridge Shops in the repairman's automobile. The track supervisor could not recall having closed or locked the switch, and the repairman had not noticed the position of the switch while he was engaged in working on the motorcar. After the accident the switch was displaying a red indication, the lever was in the keeper but was not latched, and the switch lock was lying on a switch tie. There were no indications of tampering with the switch.

## Conclusion

This accident was caused by a siding switch being inadvertently left open.

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. PATTERSON

Director.