

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2976
RUTLAND RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT MOOERS, N. Y., ON
FEBRUARY 22, 1946

SUMMARY

Railroad: Rutland
Date: February 22, 1946
Location: Mooers, N. Y.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Passenger : Freight
Train numbers: 6 : Extra 24 North
Engine numbers: 53 : 24
Consist: 5 cars : Snow plow, caboose
Estimated speed: Standing : 12 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable, train orders and
manual-block system
Track: Single; tangent; 0.70 percent
ascending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 12:30 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 4 injured
Cause: Failure to obey meet order

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2976

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

RUTLAND RAILROAD COMPANY

March 16, 1946.

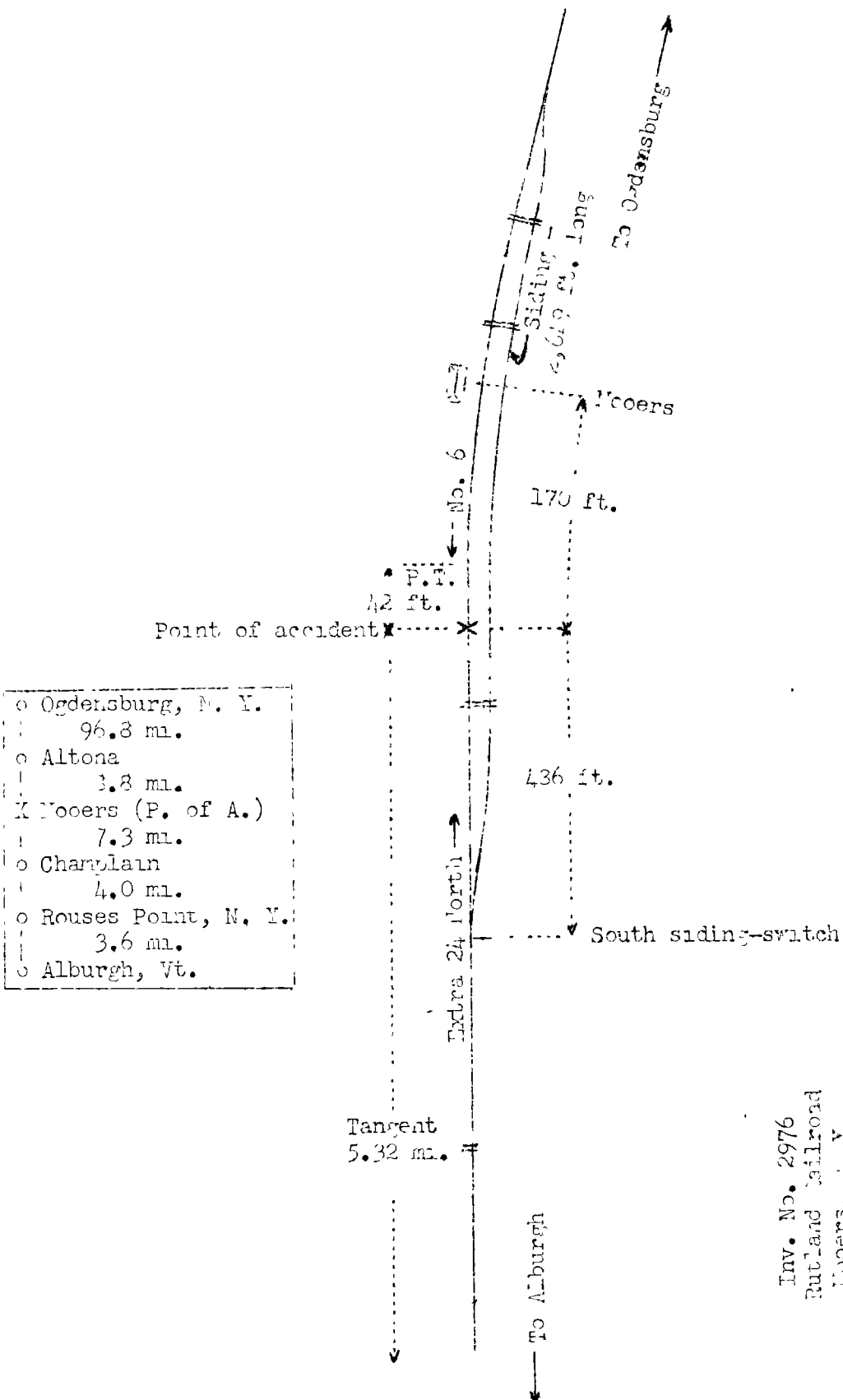
Accident at Mooers, N. Y., on February 22, 1946, caused
by failure to obey a meet order.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On February 22, 1946, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Rutland Railroad at Mooers, N. Y., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of four employees.

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 | Ogdensburg, N. Y. |
| | 96.3 mi. |
| o | Altona |
| | 3.8 mi. |
| o | K Mooers (P. of A.) |
| | 7.3 mi. |
| o | Champlain |
| | 4.0 mi. |
| o | Rouses Point, N. Y. |
| | 3.6 mi. |
| o | Alburgh, Vt. |

Inv. No. 2976
 Rutland Railroad
 Mooers, N. Y.
 February 22, 1946

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on the Ogdensburg Sub-Division, which extends between Ogdensburg, N. Y., and Alburgh, Vt., 120.5 miles, a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and a manual-block system. At Mooers, 105.6 miles south of Ogdensburg, a siding 2,649 feet in length parallels the main track on the east. The south switch of this siding is 656 feet south of the station. The accident occurred on the main track 486 feet north of the south siding-switch. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 5.32 miles immediately south of the point of accident and 42 feet northward. The grade for north-bound trains is 0.403 percent descending 1,596 feet, then there is a vertical curve 1,000 feet, followed by an ascending grade, which is, successively, 0.83 percent 1,379 feet and 0.70 percent 350 feet to the point of accident and 4,350 feet northward.

The manual block involved extended between Mooers and Champlain, 7.3 miles south of Mooers. The fixed signal at Mooers, which is used both as a train-order and a manual-block signal, is of the semaphore type. It is mounted on a mast located on the west side of the track and opposite the station. The involved night aspect and corresponding indication of this signal are as follows:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>
Red	Stop.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

17. * * *

Headlight must be dimmed:

* * *

(c) Approaching manual block and train order signals, * * * meeting points or while standing on main track at meeting points.

* * *

73. Extra trains are inferior to regular trains.

S-39. At meeting points * * * the inferior train must take the siding * * * and must pull into the siding when practicable. * * *

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS.

S-A.

Fixing Meeting Points for Opposing Trains.

- (1) * * *
- No 5 meet Extra 95 east at B.
- * * *

Trains receiving these orders will run with respect to each other to the designated points and there meet in the manner prescribed by the rules.

Clearance Form A reads in part as follows:

CLEARANCE FORM A

.....M.19...

To Conductor and Engineman..at.....

* * *

Block.....

.....Operator.

* * *

MANUAL BLOCK SYSTEM RULES.

317-B. * * *

A train must not be admitted to a block which is occupied by an opposing train or by a passenger train, * * *

* * *

362. Trains must not pass a Stop-indication without receiving Clearance Form A, * * * or a train order authorizing them to do so, except that:

- (a) When making a station stop, the head end of a passenger train may pass signal * * * not more than 300 feet if track is seen or known to be clear and the engine will not foul switch to be used by opposing trains.

The maximum authorized speed for the freight train involved was 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 6, a south-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 53, two milk cars, one baggage-mail car, one baggage car and one coach, in the order named. The first, second and fourth cars were of steel-underframe construction, and the remainder were of steel construction. At Altona, 8.8 miles north of Mooers and the last open office north of Mooers, the crew of this train received copies of train order No. 148 reading in part as follows:

Extra 24 North Meet No 6 Eng 53
at Mooers * * *

No. 6 departed from Altona at 12:06 a. m., 5 hours 5 minutes late, and stopped on the main track at Mooers at 12:25 a. m., with the engine standing 486 feet north of the south siding-switch and 170 feet south of the manual-block signal, which displayed stop. About 5 minutes later the engine was struck by Extra 24 North.

Extra 24 North, a north-bound freight train, consisted of snow plow 101, engine 24 and a caboose, in the order named. The snow plow was of wood construction with center sills reinforced with steel I-beams. At Rouses Point, 11.3 miles south of Mooers, the crew of this train received copies of train order No. 148. At Champlain, the last open office south of Mooers, the crew received manual-block authority on Form A that permitted their train to proceed to Mooers as though a clear block-signal indication was displayed. This train departed from Champlain at 12:15 a. m., passed the south siding-switch at Mooers, where it was required to enter the siding to meet No. 6, and while moving at an estimated speed of 12 miles per hour it struck No. 6 at a point 486 feet north of the switch.

The force of the impact moved No. 6 northward about 27 feet. The front end of the engine of No. 6 and the snow plow of Extra 24 North were badly damaged.

The weather was clear and there was snow on the ground at the time of the accident, which occurred about 12:30 a. m.

The employee killed was the operator of the snow plow. The employees injured were the conductor, the front brakeman and the flagman of Extra 24 North, and the assistant to the operator of the snow plow.

Discussion

The crew of each train and the operator at Mooers held copies of a train order which established Mooers as the meeting point between No. 6 and Extra 24 North. Under the rules, Extra 24 North was required to enter the siding at Mooers at the south switch, which was 656 feet south of the manual-block signal, and to remain clear of the main track until No. 6 had been met and manual-block authority to re-enter the main track had been received.

The manual-block signal at Mooers was displaying stop for each direction as the trains involved were approaching that station. The front portion of No. 6 entered the block to the south of Mooers, and the train stopped with the front of the engine 170 feet south of the signal. This movement was made for the purpose of doing work at the station, and was permissible under the rules of the carrier. When No. 6 stopped, the engineer dimmed the headlight. The first the members of the crew of No. 6 knew that Extra 24 North had failed to enter the siding was when they saw the reflection of the headlight of that train approaching about 300 feet distant.

As Extra 24 North was approaching Mooers, the speed was about 30 miles per hour. The headlight on the snow plow was lighted brightly. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The front brakeman was in the operator's compartment of the snow plow, and the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. These employees had read the meet order, and they understood that their train was required to enter the siding at Mooers at the south switch to meet No. 6. When the engine was some distance south of Mooers the engineer closed the throttle, and the speed of the train was reduced to about 20 miles per hour by the use of the independent brake valve. The enginemen said that their view of the track ahead was considerably restricted by swirling snow in front of the snow plow. They were not aware of the location of their train with relation to the south siding-switch until the engineer saw the lighted lamp on the switchstand immediately in front of the engine. Then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of Extra 24 North was about 12 miles per hour when the collision occurred. The brakes of this train had functioned properly en route. The front brakeman said that when the train was approaching Mooers he proceeded to a rear door on the right side of the snow plow, to be in position to open the south siding-switch for the train to enter the siding. When he became aware that the speed was not being reduced sufficiently for the train to stop short of the switch, he gave stop signals with a lighted white lantern. However, these signals were not seen by the enginemen. The conductor and the flagman said they thought the speed of the train was being so

controlled that it could be stopped short of the south siding-switch. Flying snow restricted their view of the switch lamp, and they did not realize that their train was proceeding on the main track north of the switch until the conductor saw the reflection of the switch lamp as the caboose passed it. Then he opened the air valve on the caboose, but this action was not taken soon enough to avert the collision.

Although the collision occurred in the block in which Extra 24 North had clear-block authority, considering the speed of Extra 24 at the time of the collision it is probable that this train would have entered the block north of Mooers if No. 6 had not intervened.

Cause

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

Dated at Washington, D. C., this eighteenth day of March, 1946.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.