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INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION,  
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INVESTIGATION NO. 2951  
SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR HANLIN, GA., ON  
NOVEMBER 24, 1945

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Seaboard Air Line  
Date: November 24, 1945  
Location: Hanlin, Ga.  
Kind of accident: Head-end collision  
Trains involved: Passenger : Freight  
Train numbers: Second 88 : Second 89  
Engine numbers: 356 : 2503  
Consist: 13 cars, caboose : 28 cars, caboose  
Estimated speed: 6 m. p. h. : 30 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable and train orders, and  
manual-block system for follow-  
ing first-class trains and  
trains carrying passengers  
Track: Single; 3° curve; 0.04 percent  
descending grade eastward  
Weather: Clear  
Time: 9:10 a. m.  
Casualties: 2 killed; 73 injured  
Cause: Failure to obey meet order  
Recommendation: That the Seaboard Air Line Railway  
Company establish an adequate  
block system on the line on which  
this accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2951

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

SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILWAY COMPANY

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December 28, 1945.

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Accident near Hanlin, Ga., on November 24, 1945, caused by  
failure to obey a meet order.

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

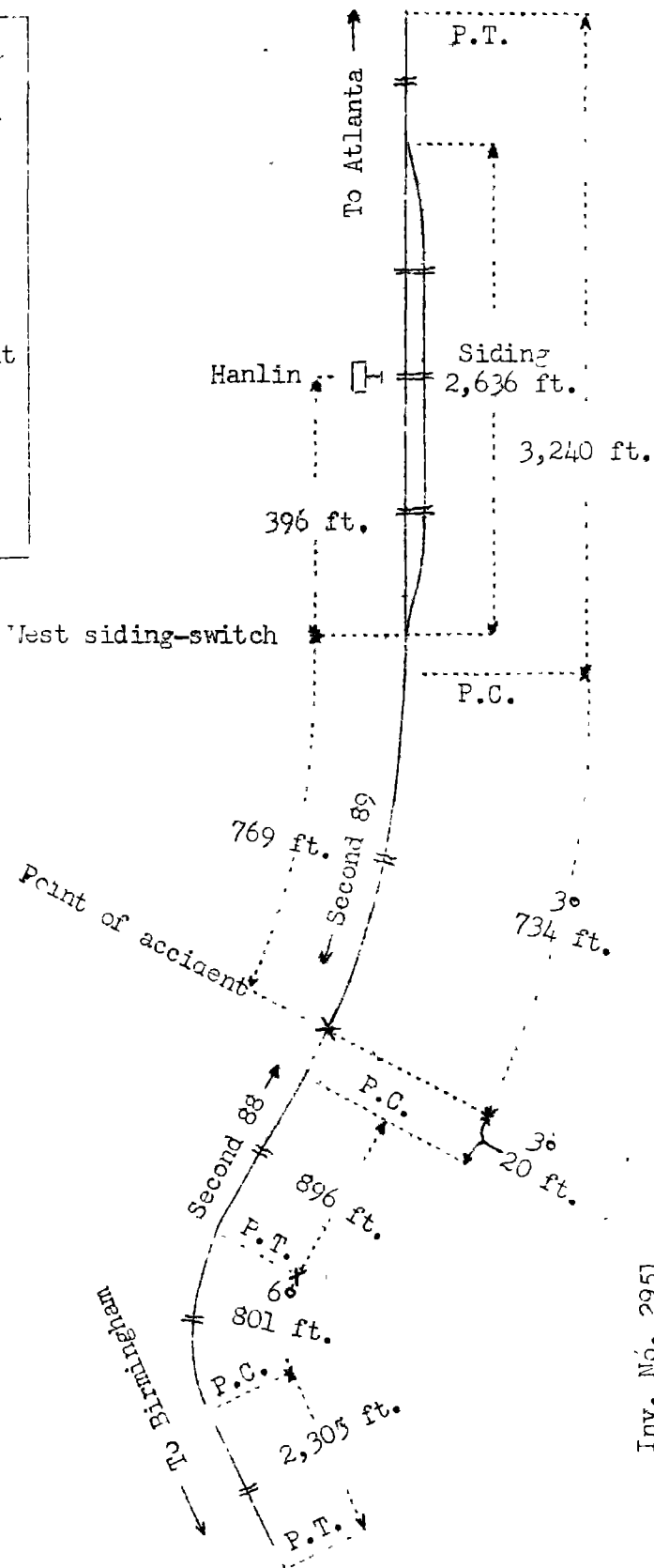
PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On November 24, 1945, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Seaboard Air Line Railway near Hanlin, Ga., which resulted in the death of 2 train-service employees, and the injury of 56 passengers, 12 Pullman employees and 5 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 Commissioner Patterson for consideration and disposition.

o	Atlanta, Ga.	2.90 mi.
o	W. & A. Junction	0.50 mi.
o	Howells Yard	27.20 mi.
o	Dallas	6.10 mi.
o	Hanlin	0.22 mi.
X	Point of accident	9.88 mi.
o	Rockmart	12.80 mi.
o	Cedartown, Ga.	106.10 mi.
o	Birmingham, Ala.	



Inv. No. 2951  
 Seaboard Air Line Railway  
 Hanlin, Ga.  
 November 24, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on the Birmingham Sub-division, which extends between Birmingham, Ala., and W. & A. Junction, near Atlanta, Ga., 162.8 miles, a single-track line in the vicinity of the point of accident, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders, and a manual-block system for following first-class trains and trains carrying passengers. At Hanlin, 129 miles east of Birmingham, a siding 2,636 feet in length parallels the main track on the south. The west switch of this siding is 396 feet west of the station. The accident occurred on the main track 769 feet west of the west siding-switch. From the west there are, in succession, a tangent 2,305 feet in length, a 6° curve to the right 801 feet, a tangent 896 feet and a 3° curve to the left 20 feet to the point of accident and 734 feet eastward. From the east there is a tangent 3,240 feet in length, which is followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.04 percent descending eastward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

Rule 14 (n). \_\_\_\_\_ o (engine and motor whistle signal). Indication: Approaching meeting, waiting or passing points, \* \* \* (See Rule 90).

\* \* \*

Rule 90. At meeting points trains must stop clear of switch used by the train to be met in going in on the siding, unless the switch is right and the track is clear.

\* \* \*

\* \* \* the engineman will give Signal 14(n) at least two (2) miles before reaching a meeting, waiting or passing point. This signal will be answered by the conductor by giving a "slow down" signal by holding out hand by day or lantern at night at arms length on engineman's side of train. This signal must be answered by the engineman by Signal 14(n). Should engineman fail to give this meeting point signal, or fail to take action to stop short of fouling point when required, conductor must take immediate action to stop the train.

Failure to give these signals will not relieve conductor, enginemen or trainmen of responsibility.

FORMS  
of  
TRAIN ORDERS.

\* \* \*

Form S-A. Fixing Meeting Point for Opposing  
trains.

\* \* \*

(1) "No. 1, Eng. 212, meet No. 2, Eng. 213,  
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.

The maximum authorized speed for the passenger train was  
55 miles per hour and for the freight train, 40 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

At Cedartown, 22.9 miles west of Hanlin, the crew of  
Second 88, an east-bound second-class passenger train, received  
copies of train order No. 226 reading as follows:

Second 88 Eng 356 meet  
Second 89 Eng 2503 at  
Hanlin Second 88  
take siding

Second 88 consisted of engine 356, one express car, one tourist  
sleeping car, one Pullman sleeping car, two tourist sleeping  
cars, two troop sleeping cars, one express car, five tourist  
sleeping cars and a caboose, in the order named. The first car  
and the caboose were of steel-underframe construction, and the  
remainder were of all-steel construction. This train departed  
from Cedartown at 8:30 a. m., 3 hours 30 minutes late, passed  
Rockmart, the last open office, 10.1 miles west of Hanlin, at  
8:52 a. m., 3 hours 22 minutes late, and while moving at an  
estimated speed of 6 miles per hour it collided with Second 89  
at a point 769 feet west of the west siding-switch at Hanlin.

At Howells Yard, 33.3 miles east of Hanlin, the crew of  
Second 89, a west-bound second-class freight train, received  
copies of train order No. 226. This train, consisting of engine  
2503, 28 cars and a caboose, departed from Howells Yard at 8:20  
a. m., 7 hours 50 minutes late, passed Dallas, the last open

office, 6.1 miles east of Hanlin, at 9:01 a. m., 7 hours 31 minutes late, passed the clearance point of the west siding-switch at Hanlin, where it was required to wait unless Second 88 was into clear on the siding, and while moving at an estimated speed of 30 miles per hour it collided with Second 88.

The engine of each train, the first car of Second 88 and the first 6 cars of Second 89 were derailed and damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 9:10 a. m.

The engineer and the fireman of Second 88 were killed. The engineer, the fireman and the front brakeman of Second 89, and the front brakeman and the flagman of Second 88 were injured.

During the 31-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 13.29 trains.

#### Discussion

The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 226, which established Hanlin as the meeting point between Second 88, an east-bound second-class train, and Second 89, a west-bound second-class train, and the order included the instruction for Second 88 to take siding at the meeting point. Under the rules, Second 89 was required to stop clear of the west siding-switch at Hanlin unless Second 88 was into clear on the siding. These trains collided at a point 769 feet west of the west siding-switch at Hanlin.

As Second 88 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 6 miles per hour. It could not be determined when the enginemen first became aware that Second 89 had passed the west siding-switch, as they were killed in the accident. Because of embankments adjacent to the track and track curvature in this vicinity, the view of the track ahead was materially restricted. The members of the train crew were in various locations throughout the cars of the train. They were not aware of anything being wrong until the accident occurred.

As Second 89 was approaching Hanlin the speed was about 30 miles per hour. The engineer was maintaining a lookout ahead. The fireman and the front brakeman were on the engine deck. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. These employees received train order No. 226 at Howells Yard, 33.3 miles east of Hanlin, about 1 hour prior to the time the accident occurred. At that time each of these employees read the train order. They understood that their train was required to stop clear of the west siding-switch at Hanlin unless Second 88 was into clear on the siding. The enginemen and the front brakeman said that after

their train departed from Howells Yard they did not again read the train order and, because of difficulty in maintaining proper steam pressure, they overlooked the provisions of the order. They were not aware of anything being wrong until the engineer saw the approaching train a few hundred feet distant. Then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the speed of the train had not been materially reduced when the collision occurred. The conductor and the flagman said they thought the meeting-point whistle signal was sounded by the engineer at least 2 miles east of Hanlin. They were not aware that Second 88 was not into clear on the siding until their caboose was in the vicinity of the east siding-switch. Then the conductor observed that the siding was unoccupied and he opened the conductor's air valve, but this action was not taken soon enough to avert the collision. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route.

Time-table special instructions in effect in this territory provide that a first-class train or a train carrying passengers must not be permitted to enter a block that is occupied by a preceding first-class train or a preceding train carrying passengers. These instructions do not provide for the blocking of opposing trains. The book of operating rules of this carrier contains manual-block rules which, among other things, provide for blocking of opposing trains, but these rules are not in effect in this territory. If an adequate block system had been in use in this territory, these opposing trains would not have been permitted to occupy the same block simultaneously.

#### Cause

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

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Seaboard Air Line Railway Company establish an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-eighth day of December, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.