

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2867
THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY SYSTEM
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT DANVILLE, VA., ON
FEBRUARY 10, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: Southern
Date: February 10, 1945
Location: Danville, Va.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: Extra 4862 North : Extra 4907 North
Engine numbers: 4862 : 4907
Consist: 55 cars, caboose : 46 cars, caboose
Estimated speed: Standing : 5 m. p. h.
Operation: Signal indications; yard limits
Track: Double; 5⁰ curve; 1.35 percent
descending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 3:20 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed
Cause: Failure properly to control
speed of following train
moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2867

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

THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY SYSTEM

March 22, 1945.

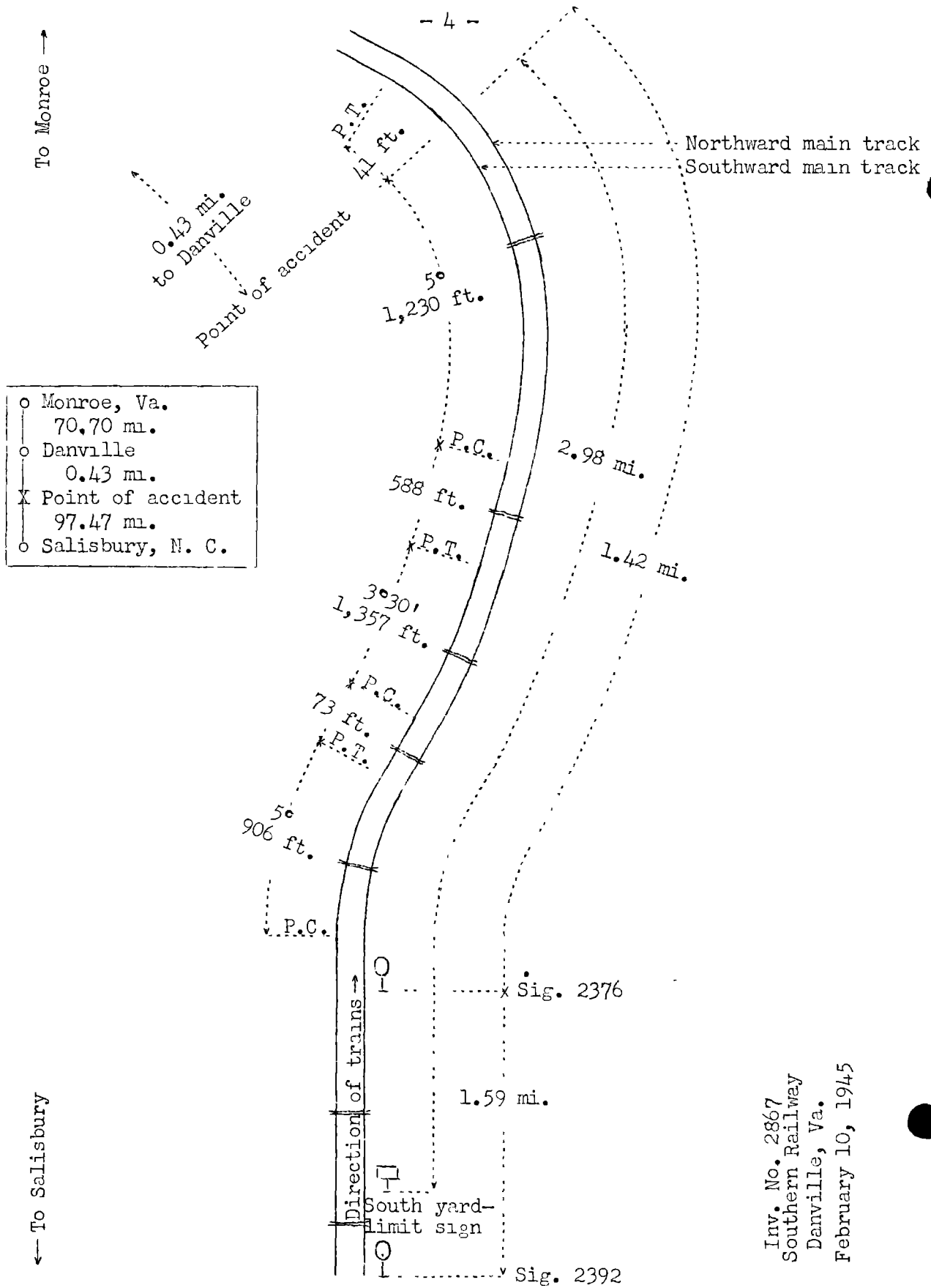
Accident at Danville, Va., on February 10, 1945, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of the
following train moving within yard limits.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On February 10, 1945, there was a rear-end collision
between two freight trains on the Southern Railway at
Danville, Va., which resulted in the death of one employee.

¹Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Com-
merce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the
Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and
disposition.



Inv. No. 2867
 Southern Railway
 Danville, Va.
 February 10, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Danville Division extending northward from Salisbury, N. C., to Monroe, Va., 168.6 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a double-track line over which trains moving with the current of traffic were operated by signal indications. The accident occurred within yard limits on the northward main track at Danville, 97.9 miles north of Salisbury, at a point 0.43 mile south of the station and 2.98 miles north of the south yard-limit sign. From the south there were, in succession, a 5° curve to the right 906 feet in length, a tangent 73 feet, a 3°30' curve to the left 1,357 feet, a tangent 588 feet, and a 5° curve to the left 1,230 feet to the point of accident and 41 feet beyond. The grade for north-bound trains was descending successively, 1.26 percent 6,630 feet, 1.02 percent 1,180 feet, 1.51 percent 890 feet, 0.87 percent 290 feet and 1.33 percent 1,006 feet to the point of accident and 1,304 feet northward.

Automatic signals 2392 and 2376, governing north-bound movements on the northward main track, were, respectively, 3.01 and 1.42 miles south of the point of accident. These signals were of the color-light type, and were continuously lighted. The involved aspects and corresponding indications and names of these signals were as follows:

<u>Signal</u>	<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
2392	Yellow	Proceed, preparing to stop at next signal. * * *	Approach Signal
2376	Red	Stop; then proceed at restricted speed	Stop and Proceed Signal

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS

* * *

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

* * *

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or switch not properly lined and look out for broken rail.

93. Within yard limits the main track may be used without protecting against second and inferior class, extra trains and engines.

Second and inferior class, extra trains and engines must move within yard limits at yard speed.

* * *

Description of Accident

Extra 4862 North, a north-bound freight train, consisting of engine 4862, 55 cars and a caboose, stopped on the northward main track at Danville about 3:10 a. m., with the rear end standing 2.98 miles north of the south yard-limit sign. About 10 minutes later the rear end was struck by Extra 4907 North.

Extra 4907 North, a north-bound freight train, consisting of engine 4907, 46 cars and a caboose, passed signal 2392, which displayed approach, passed the south yard-limit sign, stopped at signal 2376, which displayed stop-and-proceed, then proceeded, and while moving at an estimated speed of 5 miles per hour it struck Extra 4862 North.

The caboose and the rear car of Extra 4862 were derailed. The caboose and the rear two cars of Extra 4862, and the engine of Extra 4907 were damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 3:20 a. m.

The flagman of Extra 4862 was killed.

Discussion

About 10 minutes after Extra 4862 North stopped at Danville the rear end was struck by Extra 4907 North, about 3 miles north of the south yard-limit sign. As Extra 4907 North was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 15 miles per hour. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the enginemen and a student fireman were maintaining a lookout ahead. The front brakeman was in the brakeman's booth on the tender of the engine. Because of embankments adjacent to the track and track curvature, the view had by the employees on the engine of the track ahead was materially restricted. Soon after the engine entered the curve on which the accident occurred the fireman and the student fireman saw the lighted red marker lamps of the preceding train about 400 feet distant.

They called a warning to the engineer, who immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position and placed the reverse lever in position for backward movement, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped. Under the rules, the speed of Extra 4907 within yard limits was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped within one-half the range of vision.

Cause

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

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-second day of March, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.