

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2904
SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT MONTVIEW, VA., ON
JUNE 28, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: Southern
Date: June 28, 1945
Location: Montview, Va.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Freight
Train numbers: Extra 4906 North : Extra 4108 North
Engine numbers: 4906 : Diesel-electric
units 4108, 4307
and 4119
Consist: 32 cars, cabooses : 67 cars, cabooses
Estimated speed: Standing : 18 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable, train orders and
automatic block-signal sys-
tem; yard limits
Track: Double; tangent; 0.33 percent
ascending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 6:55 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 2 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control
speed of following train
moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2904

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

SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

July 31, 1945.

Accident at Montview, Va., on June 28, 1945, caused by
failure properly to control the speed of the fol-
lowing train moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On June 28, 1945, there was a rear-end collision
between two freight trains on the Southern Railway at
Montview, Va., which resulted in the death of one em-
ployee, and the injury of two employees.

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.

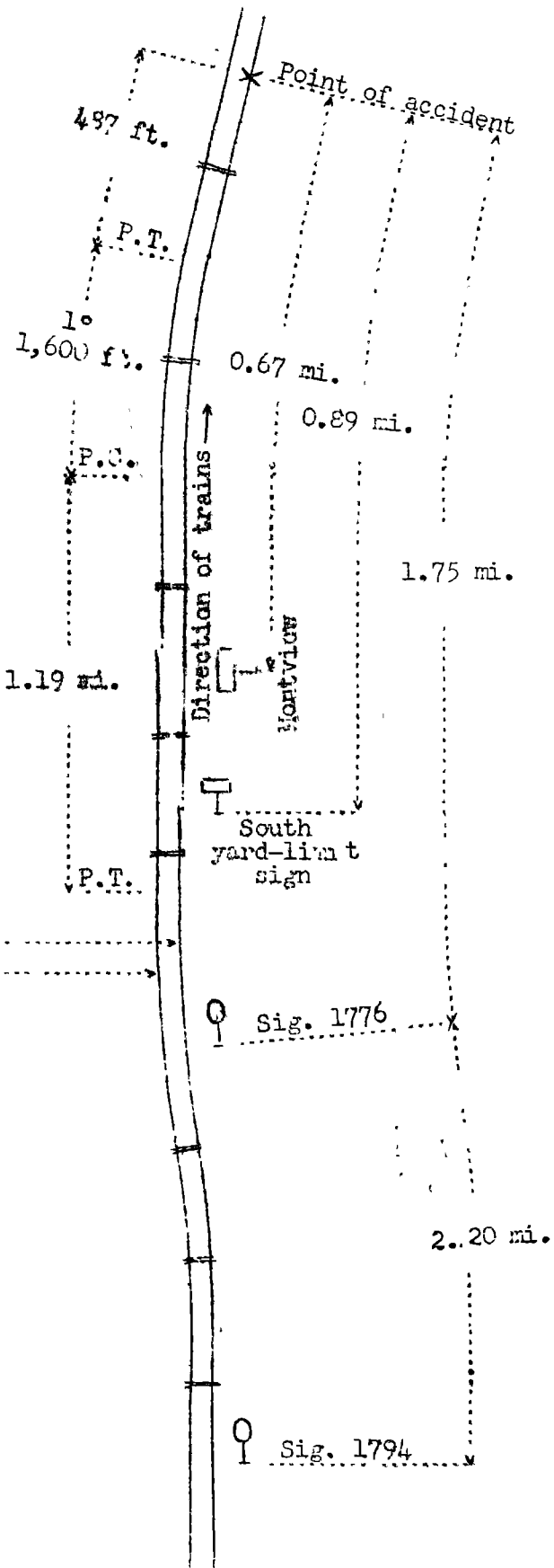
↑
To Monroe

- Monroe, Va. 11.5 mi.
- X Montview, Va. (P. of A.) 1.19 mi.
- Salisbury, N. C. 157.1 mi.

Northward main track →

Southward main track →

↓
To Salisbury



Inv. No. 2904
 Southern Railway
 Montview, Va.
 June 28, 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, a double-track line in the vicinity of the point of accident, over which trains moving with the current of traffic are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. The accident occurred within yard limits on the northward main track at Montview, 157.1 miles north of Salisbury, at a point 0.89 mile north of the south yard-limit sign and 0.67 mile north of the station. From the south there are, in succession, a tangent 1.19 miles in length, a 1° curve to the right 1,600 feet and a tangent 487 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance northward. The grade for north-bound trains varies between 0.41 percent and 1.0 percent descending throughout a distance of 1.86 miles, then there is a vertical curve 750 feet, which is followed by a 0.33-percent ascending grade 1,675 feet to the point of accident and 225 feet northward.

Automatic signals 1794 and 1776, governing north-bound movements on the northward main track, are, respectively, 3.95 miles and 1.75 miles south of the point of accident. These signals are of the color-light type, and 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>
1794	Yellow	Proceed, preparing to stop at next signal. * * *	Approach Signal
1776	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.

* * *

FIREMEN

1370. When other duties permit and for the safety of their train, they must keep a lookout for signals, obstructions or defects of track or of their trains and instantly warn the engineman,
* * *

Description of Accident

Extra 4906 North, a north-bound freight train, consisting of engine 4906, 32 cars and a caboose, stopped on the northward main track at Montview about 6:40 a. m., with the rear end standing 4,710 feet north of the south yard-limit sign. About 15 minutes later, while the engine and the crew were engaged in placing the first eight cars on an auxiliary track located some distance north of the rear portion of this train, the caboose was struck by Extra 4108 North.

Extra 4108 North, a north-bound freight train, consisting of Diesel-electric units 4108, 4307 and 4119, 67 cars and a caboose, in the order named, passed signal 1794, which displayed proceed-preparing-to-stop-at-next-signal, stopped at signal 1776, which displayed stop-then-proceed-at-restricted-speed, then proceeded, passed the south yard-limit sign, and while moving at an estimated speed of 18 miles per hour it struck Extra 4906 North.

The caboose and the rear 5 cars of Extra 4906, and the first, second and third Diesel-electric units and the first 11 cars of Extra 4108 were derailed. The caboose and the rear 3 cars of Extra 4906, and the 3 Diesel-electric units and the first 9 cars of Extra 4108 were badly damaged.

It was clear and daylight at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6:55 a. m.

The engineer of Extra 4108 was killed. The fireman and the front brakeman of Extra 4108 were injured.

Discussion

About 15 minutes after Extra 4906 North stopped at Montview the rear end was struck by Extra 4108 North about 0.89 mile north of the south yard-limit sign. As Extra 4108 North was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 18 miles per hour. The front brakeman was in the third Diesel-electric unit, and the fireman, who was in the engine compartment of the first unit, was engaged in inspecting the motors. The fireman said that he had last observed the engineer when the train stopped in the vicinity of signal 1776, and at that time the engineer appeared to be normal. Just before the accident occurred the fireman was entering the control

compartment of the first unit when he saw the caboose of the preceding train. However, the collision occurred before he could warn the engineer. Because of embankments on the right side of the track and the curve in the vicinity of the point of accident, the view from the control compartment of a north-bound Diesel-electric engine of the point where the accident occurred is restricted to a distance of about 900 feet.

It could not be determined whether or when the engineer became aware that the preceding train was occupying the northward main track, as he was killed in the accident. The brakes had been tested and had functioned properly en route. Diesel-electric unit 4108 was equipped with a safety-control feature. Apparently the engineer had either a hand on the automatic brake-valve handle or a foot on the foot diaphragm valve just before the accident occurred, as the surviving members of the crew said that no application of the brakes was made immediately prior to the collision.

Under the rules, the speed of Extra 4108 within yard limits was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped within one-half the range of vision. The fireman of the following train was required to maintain a lookout ahead and to warn the engineer of signal indications, preceding trains and other operating conditions, whenever his other duties permitted. In this case the fireman was to the rear of the operating compartment, where he was engaged in one of his duties, that of inspecting the motors. As a result, he did not see the preceding train until he returned to the control compartment, and it was then too late to warn the engineer. If the fireman had been required to subordinate the duty of inspecting the motors to the duty of maintaining a lookout ahead, it is probable he would have seen the preceding train in time to take necessary action to avert the accident.

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 thirty-first day of July, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.