

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2859
THE ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
AND
THE CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT BRINKLEY, ARK., ON
JANUARY 13, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroads: St. Louis South- : Chicago, Rock Island
western & Pacific

Date: January 13, 1945

Location: Brinkley, Ark.

Kind of accident: Side collision

Trains involved: Freight : Passenger

Train numbers: 18 : 50

Engine numbers: 760 : 959

Consist: 58 cars, caboose : 7 cars

Estimated speed: 10 m. p. h. : 2 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and : Timetable and
train orders train orders

Track: Single; tangent; : Single; tangent;
level 0.2 percent de-
scending grade
eastward

Weather: Clear

Time: 5:40 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 2 injured

Cause: Failure of the Chicago, Rock Island
& Pacific Railway Company to en-
force its rules governing movement
of trains approaching railroad
crossing at grade

Recommendation: That the St. Louis Southwestern
Railway Company and the Chicago,
Rock Island & Pacific Railway
Company install an adequate inter-
locking at the crossing involved

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2859

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

THE ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
AND
THE CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

March 7, 1945.

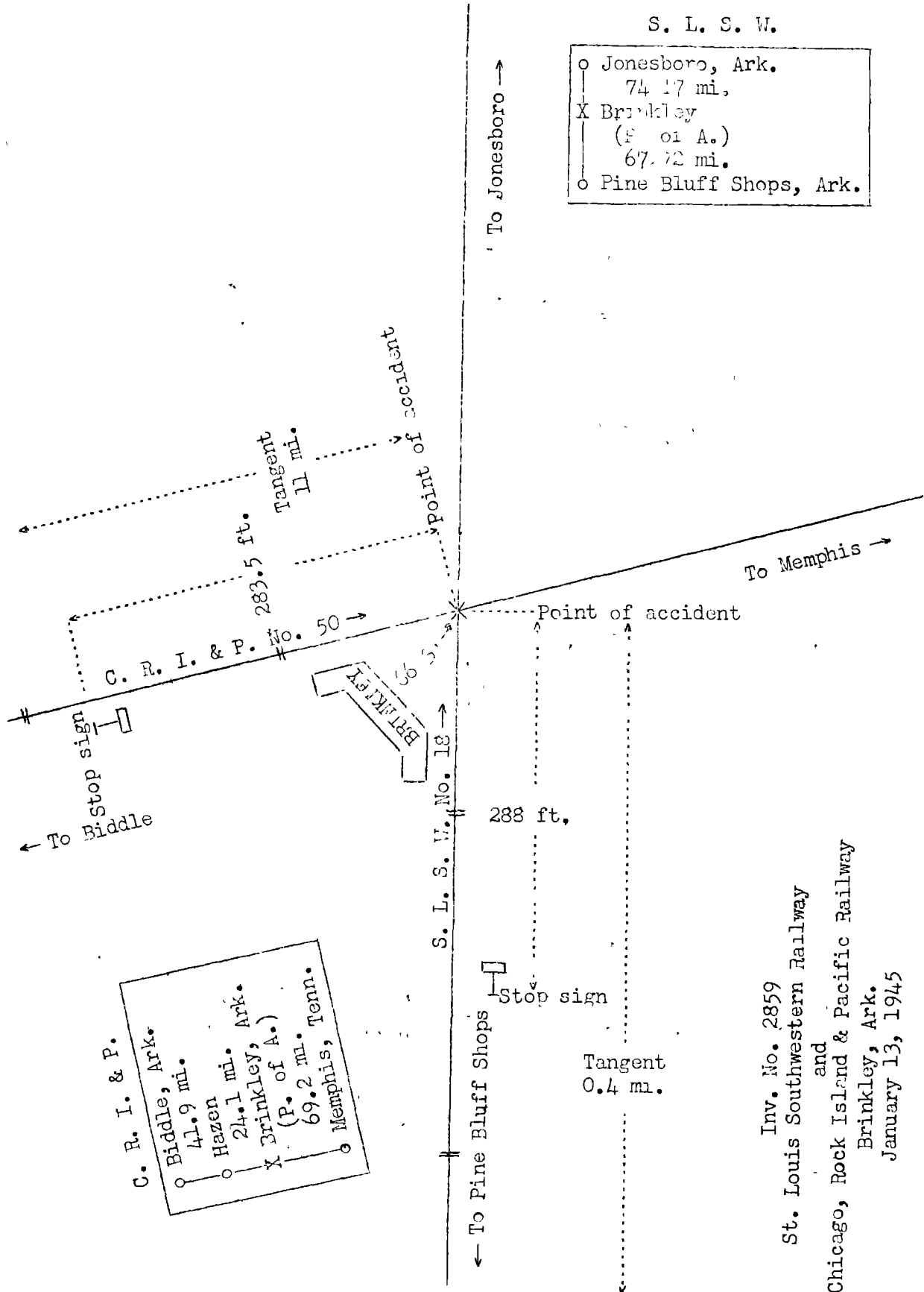
Accident at Brinkley, Ark., on January 13, 1945, caused by
failure of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway
Company to enforce its rules governing the movement
of trains approaching a railroad crossing at grade.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 13, 1945, there was a side collision between
a freight train of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway and a
passenger train of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway
at Brinkley, Ark., which resulted in the death of one employee,
and the injury of one passenger and one employee.

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.



Inv. No. 2859
 St. Louis Southwestern Railway
 and
 Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway
 Brinkley, Ark.
 January 13, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred at an intersection of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway, hereinafter referred to as the S. L. S. W., and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway, hereinafter referred to as the C. R. I. & P. Brinkley was located on that part of the Northern Division of the S. L. S. W. designated as the Jonesboro Subdivision and extending northward from Pine Bluff Shops to Jonesboro, Ark., 141.89 miles, and on that part of the Arkansas Division of the C. R. I. & P. designated as Subdivision 52 and extending eastward from Biddle, Ark., to Memphis, Tenn., 135.2 miles. Brinkley was 67.72 miles north of Pine Bluff Shops and 66 miles east of Biddle. In the vicinity of Brinkley both were single-track lines over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use on either line, and no interlocking at this intersection. The main tracks intersected at an angle of 69°34' at a point 66.3 feet east of the station, which was used by both lines and located in the southwest angle of the intersection. On the S. L. S. W. the main track was tangent throughout a distance of 0.4 mile south of the crossing and a considerable distance northward. The grade was practically level. On the C. R. I. & P. the main track was tangent throughout a distance of 11 miles west of the crossing and a considerable distance eastward. The grade was 0.2 percent descending eastward.

Stop signs governing movement of north-bound trains on the S. L. S. W. and east-bound trains on the C. R. I. & P. were located, respectively, 288 feet south and 283.5 feet west of the crossing.

Operating rules of both railroads read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Fixed Signal.--A signal of fixed location indicating a condition affecting the movement of a train or engine.

NOTE TO DEFINITION OF FIXED SIGNAL.--The definition of a "Fixed Signal" covers such signals as * * * stop signs * * *.

98. Trains and engines must approach * * * railroad crossings at grade * * * prepared to stop, unless * * * track is clear. * * *

Description of Accident

No. 18, a north-bound second-class S. L. S. W. freight train, consisting of engine 760, 58 cars and a caboose, departed from a point about 200 feet south of the crossing about 5:37 p. m. About 3 minutes later, while this train was moving over the crossing at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour, the twenty-ninth car was struck by C. R. I. & P. No. 50.

No. 50, an east-bound first-class C. R. I. & P. passenger train, consisted of engine 959; one baggage-mail car, two coaches, one chair car, one dining car, one parlor car and one Pullman sleeping car, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. This train passed Hazen, 24.1 miles west of Brinkley, at 5:14 p. m., on time, passed the stop sign at Brinkley and while moving at an estimated speed of 2 miles per hour it struck S. L. S. W. No. 18.

The twenty-ninth to the thirty-first cars, inclusive, of No. 18, and the engine of No. 50 were derailed and were considerably damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 5:40 p. m.

The fireman of No. 50 was killed, and the engineer was injured.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement on the S. L. S. W. over the crossing involved was 33.36 trains, and on the C. R. I. & P., 17.33 trains.

Discussion

As No. 50 was approaching Brinkley the speed was about 70 miles per hour. The brakes had been tested and had functioned properly at all points where used en route. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The engineer said that when the engine reached a point about 1 mile west of the crossing he made a 15-pound brake-pipe reduction, and, when the speed was reduced to about 18 miles per hour, he released the brakes. This speed was maintained until the engine was about 1,600 feet west of the crossing, then he made another 15-pound brake-pipe reduction, which was not released. The engineer said he saw a train moving over the crossing. He thought he had his train under proper control and that the engine would stop short of the crossing, but when the engine was about 500 feet west of the crossing he realized that the speed was not being controlled properly. Then he moved the brake valve to service position in an attempt to stop short of the crossing. However, the train was not stopped and the speed was about 2 miles per hour when

the engine struck No. 18. After the accident there was no condition found that would prevent the proper application of the train brakes.

Under the rules No. 50 was required to stop before it passed the stop sign, then the speed was required to be so controlled that the train could be stopped short of the crossing unless the way was seen to be clear. The superintendent of the C. R. I. & P. said that there was no modification of the rules in effect, but that it had been a long-standing practice for east-bound passenger trains to pass the stop sign without stopping until the cars were alongside the station platform and the engine was within a few feet of the crossing. In this case, if the rules had been enforced, No. 50 would have stopped at the stop sign, then proceeded under proper control, and this accident would not have occurred. If an adequate interlocking had been provided to protect the crossing, No. 50 would not have been permitted to foul the crossing while the conflicting route was occupied by No. 18, and this accident would not have occurred.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company to enforce its rules governing the movement of trains approaching a railroad crossing at grade.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company install an adequate interlocking at the crossing involved.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this seventh day of March, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.