

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2965

ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR GARLAND CITY, ARK., ON

JANUARY 6, 1946

SUMMARY

Railroad: St. Louis Southwestern
Date: January 6, 1946
Location: Garland City, Ark.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Passenger : Freight
Train numbers: 5 : Second 24
Engine numbers: 678 : 774
Consist: 7 cars : 20 cars, caboose
Estimated speed: 25 m. p. h. : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; tangent; 0.23 percent
ascending grade southward
Weather: Cloudy
Time: 4:35 p. m.
Casualties: 20 injured
Cause: Inferior train occupying main
track on time of opposing
superior train
Recommendation: That the St. Louis Southwestern
Railway Company install an ade-
quate block system on the line
on which this accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2965

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

ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

February 28, 1946.

Accident near Garland City, Ark., on January 6, 1946,
caused by an inferior train occupying the main
track on the time of an opposing superior train.

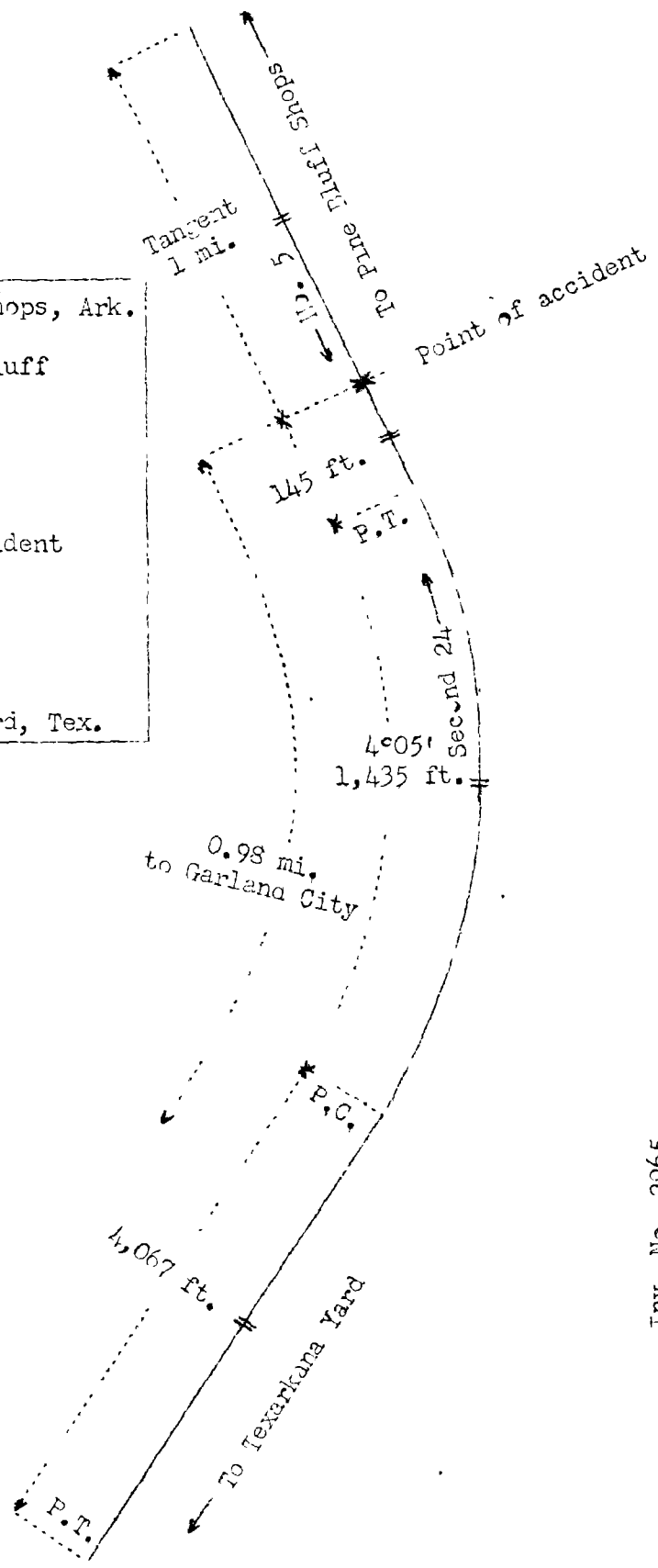
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 6, 1946, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the St. Louis Southwestern Railway near Garland City, Ark., which resulted in the injury of 13 passengers, 1 person carried under contract, 3 dining-car employees, 1 train porter and 2 train-service 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 Pine Bluff Shops, Ark.
2.59 mi.
- o South Pine Bluff
120.37 mi.
- o Lewisville
4.20 mi.
- o Spirit Lake
2.77 mi.
- X Point of accident
0.98 mi.
- o Garland City
12.56 mi.
- o Genoa, Ark.
8.96 mi.
- o Texarkana Yard, Tex.



Inv. No. 2965
 St. Louis Southwestern Railway
 Garland City, Ark.
 January 6, 1946

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Northern Division extending between Pine Bluff Shops, Ark., and Texarkana Yard, Tex., 152.43 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track 129.93 miles south of Pine Bluff Shops, at a point 0.98 mile north of the station at Garland City. From the north there is a tangent about 1 mile to the point of accident and 145 feet southward. From the south there are, in succession, a tangent 4,067 feet in length, a 4°05' curve to the left 1,435 feet and the tangent on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.23 percent ascending southward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

5. * * *

The time applies at the switch where an opposing train enters the siding; * * *

* * *

S-72. Trains of the first class are superior to those of the second; * * *

* * *

S-97. An inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains and failing to clear the main track by the time required by rule must be protected as prescribed by Rule 99.

* * *

S-89. At meeting points, the inferior train must take the siding and clear the time of the superior train not less than five minutes, * * *

* * *

99. When a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals a sufficient distance to insure full protection, placing two torpedoes, and when necessary, in addition, displaying lighted fuses.

* * *

The front of the train must be protected in the same way when necessary by the forward trainman or fireman.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains is 60 miles per hour and for freight trains, 50 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 5, a south-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 678, two baggage cars, three coaches, one dining car and one Pullman sleeping car, in the order named. The second and the fourth cars were of steel-underframe construction, and the remainder were of all-steel construction. This train departed from Lewisville, the last open office, 7.95 miles north of Garland City, at 4:25 p. m., on time, passed Spirit Lake, 3.75 miles north of Garland City, about 4:32 p. m., 1 minute late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 25 miles per hour it collided with Second 24 at a point 0.98 mile north of Garland City.

Second 24, a north-bound second-class freight train, consisting of engine 774, 20 cars and a caboose, passed Genoa, the last open office, 12.56 miles south of Garland City, at 4:15 p. m., 5 hours late, passed Garland City about 4:31 p. m., 4 hours 53 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it collided with No. 5.

The engines of both trains, the first two cars of No. 5 and the first three cars of Second 24 were derailed and damaged.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:35 p. m.

The engineer and the conductor of No. 5 were injured.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that an inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains, and inferior trains must clear the time of opposing regular trains not less than 5 minutes. If an inferior train fails to clear the time of an opposing superior train, flag protection must be provided.

No. 5, a south-bound first-class train, was due to leave Spirit Lake, 3.75 miles north of Garland City, at 4:31 p. m., and Garland City at 4:38 p. m. There is a siding at each of these stations. Second 24, a north-bound second-class train,

was inferior to No. 5, and, under the rules, was required to be into clear at Spirit Lake not later than 4:26 p. m., if it proceeded to that station for No. 5. Second 24 passed Garland City about 4:31 p. m., and, about 4:35 p. m., when it was 0.98 mile north of Garland City, it collided with No. 5.

As No. 5 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 50 miles per hour, and the engine-men were maintaining a lookout ahead. No train order restricting the authority of No. 5 to proceed with respect to Second 24 had been issued. The first the engine-men were aware of anything being wrong was when the engineer saw the engine of the approaching train as it was moving on the curve a few hundred feet distant. Then he moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 5 was about 25 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The members of the crew of Second 24 had compared time, and there was a variation of only a few seconds in their watches. These employees understood that their train was inferior to No. 5, and that their train was required to clear the time of No. 5 not less than 5 minutes. However, Second 24 passed Garland City, the last siding south of Spirit Lake, at 4:31 p. m., which was 5 minutes later than the time this train was required to be into clear on the siding at Spirit Lake, if it proceeded to that station to meet No. 5. As Second 24 was approaching the point where the collision occurred the speed was about 30 miles per hour. The engine-men were maintaining a lookout ahead. The swing brakeman and the front brakeman were in the brakeman's booth on the tender of the engine. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The fireman saw No. 5 approaching about 800 feet distant and called a warning to the engineer. Then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of Second 24 was about 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred. Members of the crew of Second 24 said they overlooked the schedule of No. 5 and did not realize that their train was proceeding without authority with respect to No. 5 until immediately prior to the collision.

In the territory involved trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. The Commission investigated a rear-end collision which occurred on October 3, 1942, on this line near Ogemaw, about 48 miles north of the location of the present accident. The Commission's report covering the investigation of that accident carried the recommendation that the St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company establish an adequate block-signal system on the line involved, which extends between Pine Bluff Shops and Texarkana Yard, 152.43 miles. After that report was issued, the carrier installed a centralized-traffic-control system between South Pine Bluff and Lewisville, 120.37 miles, and this installation was placed in service a short time before

the present accident occurred. The southern end of this installation is about 8 miles north of Garland City. This installation complied in part with the recommendation contained in the former report. The accident here under investigation might have been prevented if an adequate block system had been in use in the territory involved, since these opposing trains would not have been permitted to occupy the same block simultaneously.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by an inferior train occupying the main track on the time of an opposing superior train.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company install an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred. An order to show cause why it should not do so will be served on said carrier.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-eighth day of February, 1946.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.