

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2922
ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY OF TEXAS
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT MT. PLEASANT, TEX., ON
AUGUST 13, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: St. Louis Southwestern of Texas
Date: August 13, 1945
Location: Mt. Pleasant, Tex.
Kind of accident: Collision
Trains involved: Freight : Cut of freight cars
Train number: First 18 :
Engine number: 752 :
Consist: 36 cars, cabooses: 15 cars
Speed: 15 m. p. h. : Standing
Operation: Timetable and train orders;
yard limits
Track: Single; tangent; 0.645 percent
ascending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 2:15 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 2 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control
speed of train moving within
yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2922

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

ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY OF TEXAS

September 26, 1945.

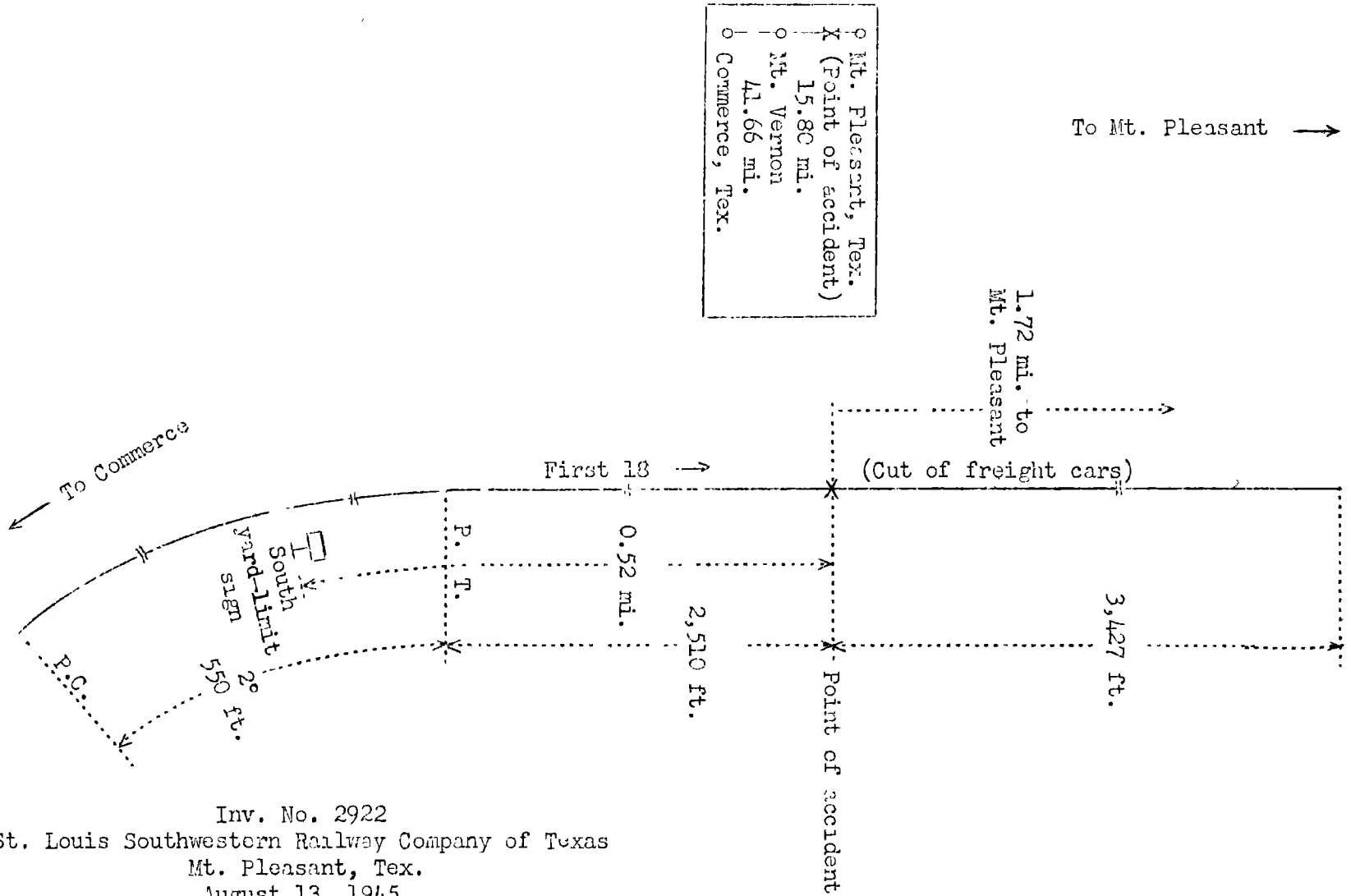
Accident at Mt. Pleasant, Tex., on August 13, 1945, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of a train
moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 13, 1945, there was a collision between a
freight train and a cut of freight cars on the line of the
St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company of Texas at
Mt. Pleasant, Tex., which resulted in the death of one
employee, 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.



Inv. No. 2922
 St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company of Texas
 Mt. Pleasant, Tex.
 August 13, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on the Commerce Sub-division, extending between Commerce and Mt. Pleasant, Tex., 57.46 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred within yard limits on the main track at Mt. Pleasant, at a point 0.52 mile north of the south yard-limit sign and 1.72 miles south of the station. From the south there is a 2° curve to the right 550 feet in length, which is followed by a tangent 2,510 feet to the point of accident and 3,427 feet northward. The grade is 0.645 percent ascending northward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train or engine to be reduced.

* * *

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 restricted speed.

Description of Accident

About 1 a. m., during switching operations, engine 778 left a cut of 15 freight cars standing on the main track within yard limits at Mt. Pleasant. About 1 hour 15 minutes later the south car was struck by First 18.

First 18, a north-bound second-class freight train, consisting of engine 752, 36 cars and a caboose, passed Mt. Vernon, 15.8 miles south of Mt. Pleasant and the last open office, at 1:52 a. m., 13 minutes late, passed the south yard-limit sign at Mt. Pleasant, and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it struck the cut of cars.

The most southerly 5 of the 15 cars on the main track and the engine and the first 2 cars of First 18 were derailed and damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 2:15 a. m.

The engineer of First 18 was killed, and the fireman and the front brakeman were injured.

Discussion

During switching operations at Mt. Pleasant, engine 778 left 15 cars standing on the main track, and the cut of cars was struck by First 18, a second-class train, at a point 2,756 feet north of the south yard-limit sign. Under the rules, the speed of First 18 within yard limits was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction.

When the accident occurred the members of the crew of engine 778 were in the vicinity of their engine, which was standing a short distance north of the north end of the cut of cars. These employees said they were not aware that First 18 was approaching until immediately prior to the collision.

As First 18 was approaching Mt. Pleasant the speed was about 25 miles per hour. The brakes had functioned properly at all points where used en route. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The fireman said that when the engine was in the vicinity of the south yard-limit sign the engineer called "Mt. Pleasant yard limit," and made a service brake-pipe reduction. When the engine was a short distance north of the yard-limit sign the engineer released the brakes, and a speed of about 15 miles per hour was maintained until the engine reached a point about 250 feet south of the point where the accident occurred. Then the enginemen saw the cut of cars, and the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped. The engineer was killed. The members of the train crew were not aware of anything being wrong until the brakes were applied in emergency immediately prior to the collision.

Cause

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

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-sixth day of September, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.