

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3124
ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT SALINE, ARK., ON
AUGUST 23, 1947

SUMMARY

Railroad: St. Louis Southwestern
Date: August 23, 1947
Location: Saline, Ark.
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Passenger
Train numbers: Extra 763 North : 2
Engine numbers: 763 : 679
Consists: 20 cars, caboose : 6 cars
Estimated speeds: Standing : 5 m. p. h.
Operation: Signal indications
Track: Single; tangent; 0.03 percent
descending grade northward
Weather: Clear
Time: 2:15 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 6 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control speed
of following train moving on
siding

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3124

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

ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

September 23, 1947

Accident at Saline, Ark., on August 23, 1947, caused by
failure properly to control the speed of the
following train moving on a siding.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

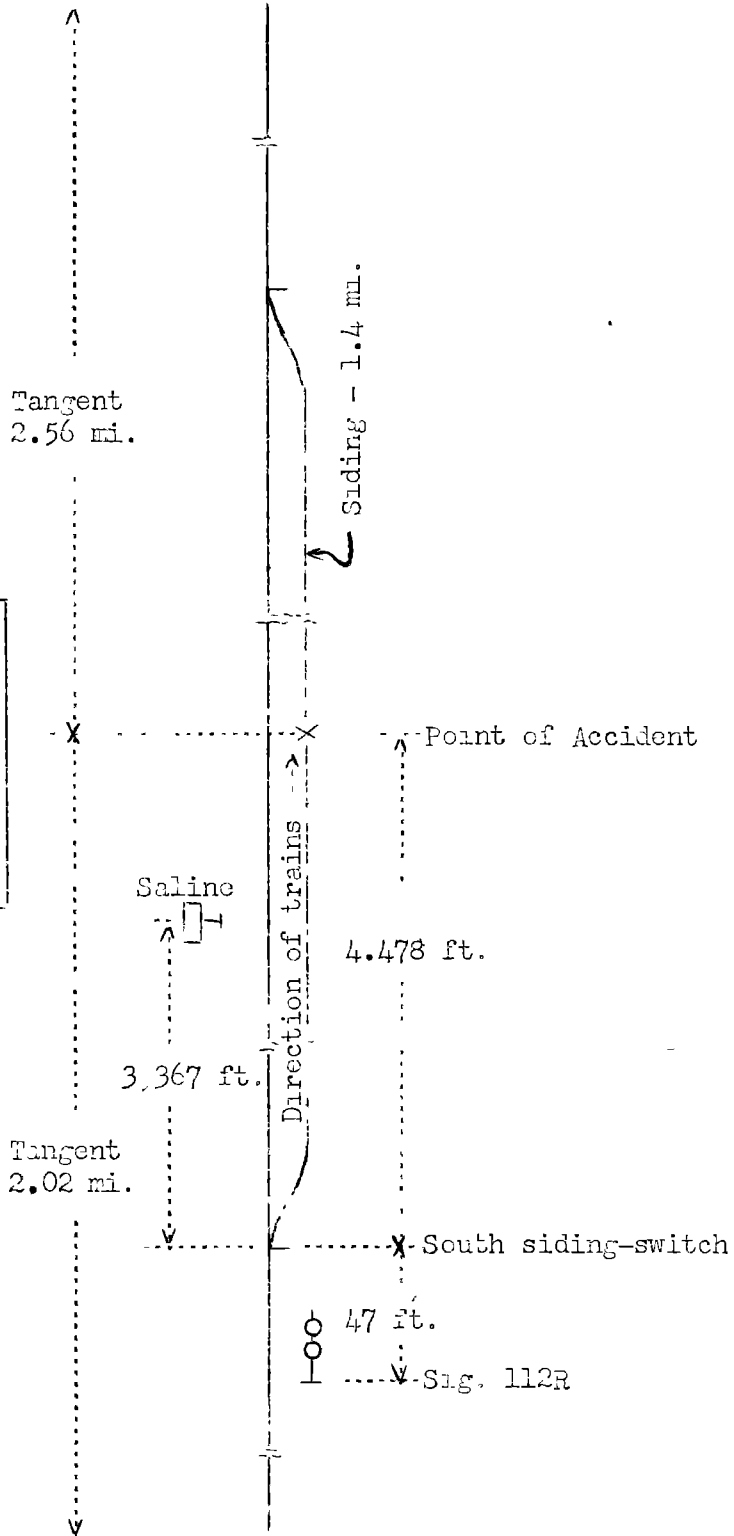
PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 23, 1947, there was a rear-end collision
between a freight train and a passenger train on the St.
Louis Southwestern Railway at Saline, Ark., which resulted
in the death of one employee, and the injury of four
passengers and two employees.

¹
Under 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 Pine Bluff Shops →

← To Texarkana Yard



- Pine Bluff Shops, Ark.
30.34 mi.
- X Saline
(Point of Accident)
10.34 mi.
- Fordyce, Ark.
111.75 mi.
- Texarkana Yard, Tex.

Inv. No. 3124
 St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company
 Saline, Ark.
 August 23, 1947

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Northern Division extending between Texarkana Yard, Tex., and Pine Bluff Shops, Ark., 152.43 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by signal indications. At Saline, 122.09 miles north of Texarkana Yard, a siding 1.4 miles in length parallels the main track on the east. The south switch of this siding is 3,367 feet south of the station sign. Entry to the siding at the south switch is made through a No. 16 turnout. The accident occurred on the siding at a point 4,478 feet north of the south switch. The main track is tangent throughout a distance of 2.02 miles immediately south of the point of accident and 2.56 miles northward. From the south siding-switch to the point of accident, the gradient on the siding varies from 0.03 to 0.30 percent descending for north-bound trains, and it is 0.03 percent at the point of accident.

Semi-automatic signal 112R, governing north-bound movements entering the turnout of the south siding-switch, is 47 feet south of the switch. The involved aspect and corresponding indication and name of this signal are as follows:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
Red-over-yellow	PROCEED VIA DIVERGING ROUTE AT RESTRICTED SPEED * * *	APPROACH RESTRICTING SIGNAL

Signal 112R and the south siding-switch are controlled by a centralized-traffic-control machine at Pine Bluff Shops, 30.34 miles north of Saline.

This carrier's operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Restricted Speed.--A speed that will permit stopping short of another train or an obstruction, but not exceeding 15 miles per hour.

* * *

17. The headlight will be displayed to the front of every train by night. * * *

It must be dimmed:

* * *

(c) Approaching * * * meeting points * * *

* * *

19. The following signals will be displayed to the rear of every train, as markers, to indicate the rear of the train:

* * *

Rear of train by night when clear of main track.

Lights * * *, showing green to the front, side and to rear.

* * *

105. Trains or engines using a siding or yard track must proceed at restricted speed.

* * *

Description of Accident

Extra 763 North, a north-bound freight train, consisting of engine 763, 20 cars and a caboose, entered the siding at Saline to meet No. 1, a south-bound first-class train, and stopped into clear about 2:05 a. m., with the rear end standing 4,478 feet north of the south-siding switch. About 10 minutes later the rear end was struck by No. 2.

No. 2, a north-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 679, one mail-express car, one baggage car, two coaches and two sleeping cars, in the order named. The fourth car was of steel-underframe construction, and the remainder of the cars were of all-steel construction. This train departed from Fordyce, the last open office, 10.34 miles south of Saline, at 2:04 a. m., 11 minutes late, passed signal 112R, which displayed proceed-via-diverging-route-at-restricted-speed, entered the south siding-switch at Saline to meet No. 1, and while moving on the siding at an estimated speed of 5 miles per hour it struck Extra 763 North.

The caboose, the rear car of Extra 763 North, the engine-truck wheels and the Nos. 1 and 2 driving wheels of the engine of No. 2 were derailed. The caboose of Extra 763 North was badly damaged. The front end of the engine of No. 2 was considerably damaged.

The swing brakeman of Extra 763 North was killed. The conductor of Extra 763 North and the baggageman of No. 2 were injured.

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

Discussion

The south siding-switch at Saline was lined for Extra 763 North and No. 2 to enter the siding to meet No. 1, and the controlling signals were displaying proper indications for these movements. Extra 763 North stopped on the siding about 2:05 a. m., with its rear end 4,478 feet north of the south siding-switch. It was struck by No. 2 at 2:15 a. m.

As No. 2 was approaching signal 112R, in the immediate vicinity of the south siding-switch at Saline, the speed was about 12 miles per hour. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. Signal 112R displayed proceed-via-diverging-route-at-restricted-speed, and the route was lined for No. 2 to enter the siding. There was no condition of the engine which distracted the attention of the enginemen or obscured their view of the track ahead. Soon after the engine entered the siding the engineer saw the reflection of the dimly lighted headlight of the engine of No. 1, which was moving on the main track, and he placed the headlight switch of his engine in dim position. Immediately after the engine of No. 1 passed the engine of No. 2, the engineer of No. 2 placed the headlight switch in bright position, then he and the fireman saw the caboose of the preceding train about 60 feet distant. At that time the speed of No. 2 was about 8 miles per hour, and the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped. The air brakes had functioned properly at all points where used en route. Under the rules, No. 2 was required to be operated prepared to stop short of a train or an obstruction while it was moving on the siding. The enginemen said the reflection of the headlight of No. 1 affected their vision to the extent that they did not see the preceding train soon enough to prevent the collision.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train moving on a siding.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-third day of September, 1947.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.