

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

---

INVESTIGATION NO. 2602  
THE ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENTS  
NEAR MALDEN, MO., ON  
JULY 17, 1942

---

- 2 -

## SUMMARY

Railroad: St. Louis Southwestern  
 Date: July 17, 1942  
 Location: Malden, Mo.  
 Kinds of accidents: Rear-end collision and wreckage struck by train moving on adjacent track  
 Trains involved: St. L. S. W. : M. P. : St. L. S. W.  
                   freight                freight                passenger  
 Train numbers: Extra 776 : Extra 1438 : 6  
                   South                        South  
 Engine numbers: 776 : 1438 : 664  
 Consist: 110 cars, : 83 cars, : 5 cars  
           caboose                caboose  
 Speed: Standing : 15 m. p. h. : 12-15 m. p. h.  
 Operation: Timetable and train orders; yard limits  
 Track: Single; 2° curve; level  
 Weather: Clear  
 Time: 12:55 a. m. and 12:59 a. m.  
 Casualties: 31 injured  
 Causes: First accident caused by failure properly to control speed of following train moving within yard limits, and second accident caused by failure properly to control speed of train moving on siding and by failure to protect third train from wreckage

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

---

INVESTIGATION NO. 2602

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

THE ST. LOUIS SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

---

August 28, 1942.

---

First accident near Malden, Mo., on July 17, 1942, caused by failure properly to control speed of following train moving within yard limits, and second accident caused by failure properly to control speed of train moving on siding and by failure to protect third train from wreckage.

---

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

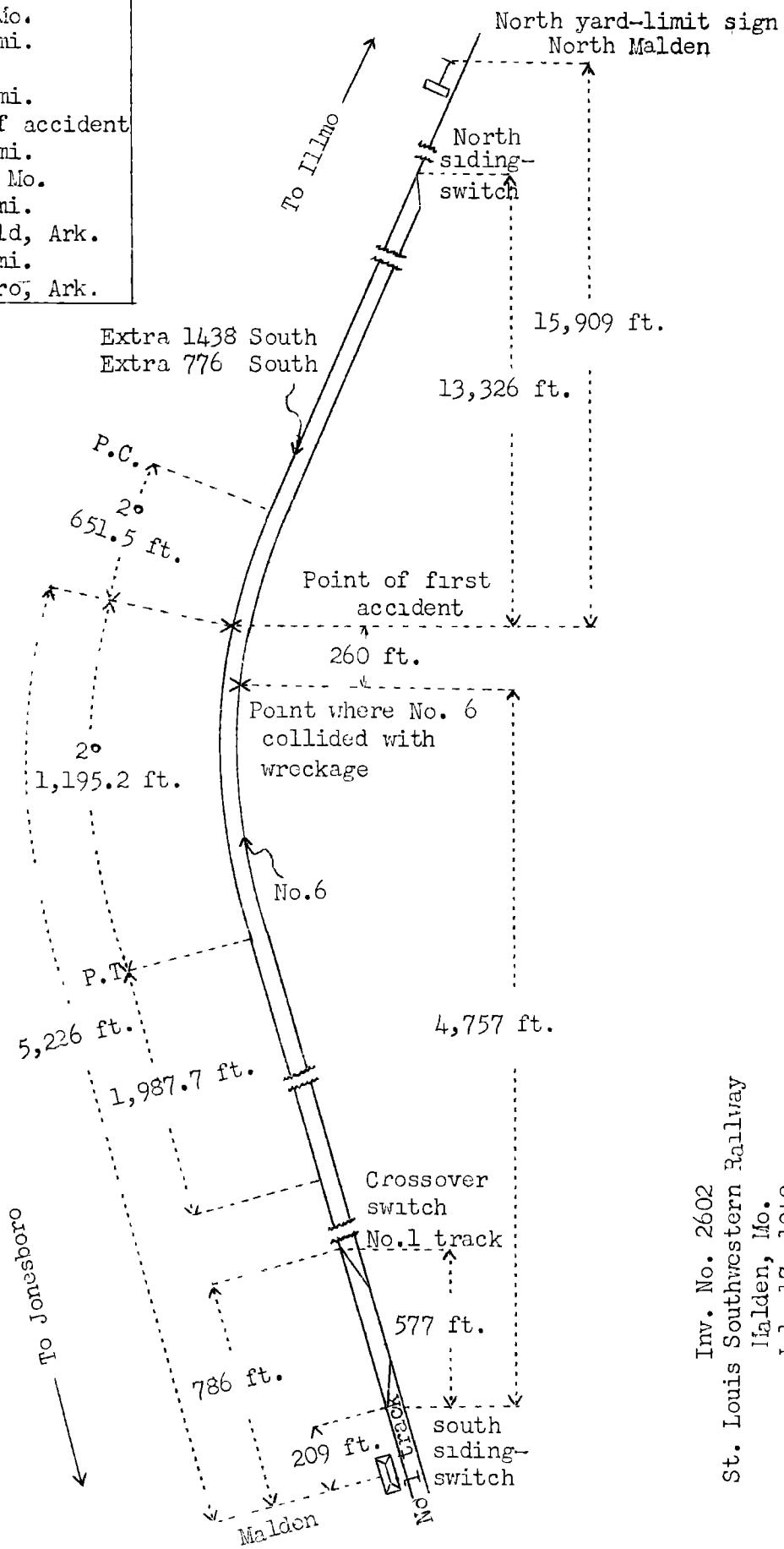
PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On July 17, 1942, there was a rear-end collision between a St. Louis Southwestern Railway freight train and a Missouri Pacific Railroad freight train and the wreckage was struck by a St. Louis Southwestern Railway passenger train on the line of the latter-mentioned carrier near Malden, Mo., which resulted in the injury of 24 passengers, 1 railway-mail clerk, 1 Pullman employee and 5 train-service employees.

---

<sup>1</sup>Under 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 | Illmo, Mo.        | 56.22 mi. |
| o | Bernie            | 7.20 mi.  |
| X | Point of accident | 0.99 mi.  |
| o | Malden, Mo.       | 45.71 mi. |
| o | Paragould, Ark.   | 21.20 mi. |
| o | Jonesboro, Ark.   |           |



Inv. No. 2602  
 St. Louis Southwestern Railway  
 Malden, Mo.  
 July 17, 1942

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

Trains of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, hereinafter referred to as the M. P., are operated over the St. Louis Southwestern Railway, hereinafter referred to as the St. L. S. W., between Illmo, Mo., and Paragould, Ark., a distance of 110.12 miles. This accident occurred on that part of the Northern Division designated as the Illmo Subdivision and extending between Illmo, Mo., and Jonesboro, Ark., a distance of 131.32 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. Between North Malden and Malden a siding 18,343 feet in length parallels the main track on the east and its south switch is located 209 feet north of the station at Malden. The first accident occurred on the main track within yard limits at a point 5,226 feet north of the station at Malden and 15,909 feet south of the north yard-limit sign at North Malden. The second accident occurred on the siding at a point 4,966 feet north of the station at Malden. The north switch of a facing-point crossover for south-bound movements from the main track to the siding and thence to yard track No. 1 is located 577 feet north of the south siding-switch. As the point of the first accident is approached from the north the track is tangent several miles and then there is a 2° curve to the left 651.5 feet to the point of the first accident and 1,195.2 feet beyond. As the point of the second accident is approached from the south on the siding there is a tangent 1,987.7 feet, which is followed by the 2° curve to the right 935.2 feet to the point where this accident occurred. In this vicinity the grade is practically level.

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.

102. When a train is disabled or stopped suddenly by an emergency application of the air brake, or other causes, adjacent tracks \* \* \* that are liable to be obstructed, must at once be protected until

it is ascertained they are safe and clear for the movement of trains.

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

\* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains in the territory involved is 45 miles per hour.

### Description of Accident

Extra 776 South, a south-bound St. L. S. W. freight train, consisted of engine 776, 1 loaded car, 109 empty cars and a caboose. This train departed from Illmo, 64.41 miles north of Malden, at 9 p. m., July 16, according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains. At Dexter Jct., 17.5 miles north of Malden, the crew received a clearance card and copies of train order No. 185, Form 19, which read in part as follows:

Three Extras 776-1438 and 1519 South  
have right over \* \* \* No 6 Eng 664 \* \* \*  
Dexter Jct. to No. 1 track Malden \* \* \*

Extra 776 departed from Dexter Jct. at 12:14 a. m., passed Bernie, 8.19 miles north of Malden and the lost open office, at 12:35 a. m., and stopped on the main track at Malden at 12:52 a. m., with the caboose standing 15,909 feet south of the north yard-limit sign. About 3 minutes later the rear end of this train was struck by Extra 1438 South.

Extra 1438 South, a south-bound M. P. freight train, consisted of engine 1438, 1 auxiliary water car, 19 loaded and 63 empty cars and a caboose. This train departed from Illmo at 9:05 p. m., July 16, according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains. At Dexter Jct. the crew received a clearance card and copies of train order No. 185, Form 19, previously quoted. It departed from Dexter Jct. at 12:22 a. m., passed Bernie at 12:43 a. m., passed the north yard-limit sign at North Malden and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it collided with the rear end of Extra 776 South.

No. 6, a north-bound first-class St. L. S. W. passenger train, consisted of engine 664, one baggage car, one mail-express car, one coach, one club car, and one Pullman sleeping car, in the order named. The fourth car was of steel-underframe construction and the remainder were of all-steel construction. This train departed from Jonesboro, 66.91 miles south of Malden, at 10:23 p. m., July 16, according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, 13 minutes late. At Malden the crew received a clearance card and copies of two train orders, of which one was train order No. 185, previously quoted. No. 6 departed from Malden at 12:54 a. m., 14 minutes late, entered the siding through the south siding-switch, and while moving at an estimated speed of 12 to 15 miles per hour it struck the wreckage of Extra 776 and Extra 1438 which fouled the siding at a point 4,757 feet north of the south siding-switch.

The brakes of Extra 1438 and of No. 6 had been tested and they functioned properly. There was no condition of the engine of either train that distracted the attention of the respective crews or obscured their vision.

The caboose of Extra 776 South fouled the siding and was badly damaged. The rear four cars were derailed and stopped, badly damaged, at various angles to the tracks. The fifth car from the rear was derailed and stopped, considerably damaged, upright and in line with the track. Engine 1438, of Extra 1438 South, was badly damaged and stopped at a point 260 feet south of the point of collision, with the front end of the engine near the center-line of the siding. The tender was derailed, remained coupled to the engine and stopped upright at an angle of 45 degrees to the main track. The auxiliary water car and the second car were derailed and considerably damaged. The front truck of the third car was derailed. Engine 664, of No. 6, was derailed and stopped, slightly damaged, upright and parallel to the siding.

It was clear at the time of these accidents, which occurred about 12:55 and 12:59 a. m.

The train-service employees injured were the fireman, the conductor, the brakeman and the express-baggage-man of No. 6 and the conductor of Extra 776 South.

#### Discussion

The rules governing operation within yard limits on the line involved provide that trains may use the main track but must protect against first-class trains, and that second-class, inferior class and extra trains and engines must move at restricted speed. Trains or engines using a siding must move at restricted speed, which requires that a train or engine must move under control and be prepared to stop short of a train or obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train or engine to be reduced. Under conditions where there is danger of obstructing adjacent tracks, such tracks must be protected. All the employees involved understood these requirements.

At 12:52 a. m. Extra 776 South stopped on the main track with the engine immediately north of the crossover switch of yard track No. 1, and with the caboose standing at a point 15,909 feet south of the north yard-limit sign. About 3 minutes later the rear end of this train was struck by Extra 1438 South. No. 6 departed from Malden at 12:54 a. m. and about 5 minutes later, while moving on the siding, it struck the wreckage of Extra 776 and Extra 1438 which obstructed the siding. Under the rules, the speed of Extra 1438 and of No. 6 was required to be so controlled that each train could be stopped short of a train or obstruction.

As Extra 1438 was approaching the north yard-limit sign the headlight was lighted brightly, the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead and the speed was about 45 miles per hour. As the engine passed the yard-limit sign, the engineer moved the throttle to drifting position and made a 15-pound brake-pipe

reduction. At a point about 2,500 feet south of the yard-limit sign the speed was reduced to about 10 miles per hour and the engineer released the brakes. At a point about 3,500 feet north of the point where the accident occurred, the speed had increased to about 20 miles per hour and the engineer made a light service brake-pipe reduction and then released the brakes. At a point about 700 feet north of the point where the accident occurred, the speed was about 20 miles per hour when the fireman saw the caboose of the preceding train. He called a warning to the engineer, who moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the distance was not sufficient for the train to stop short of Extra 776. The conductor and the flagman of Extra 776 were in their caboose when they became aware of the impending accident. The flagman ran toward the approaching train and gave stop signals with a lighted white lantern, but he was unable to prevent the accident. The engineer of the following train said that he misjudged the location of the rear end of the preceding train.

There were five employees at the point where the first accident occurred but none of them attempted to prevent No. 6 from striking the wreckage until a few seconds before the second accident occurred, although they had approximately 4 minutes in which to provide protection. As No. 6 was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the headlight was lighted brightly, the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead and the speed was about 12 or 15 miles per hour. The engineer first saw the wreckage when his engine was about 100 feet from it and he immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the distance was not sufficient for his train to stop short of the obstruction.

If the speed of Extra 1438 and of No. 6 had been so controlled that each train could be stopped short of a train or obstruction, as required by the rules, both of these accidents would have been averted.

#### Cause

It is found that the first accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of the following train moving within yard limits, and the second accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of a train moving on a siding and by failure to protect third train from the wreckage.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-eighth day of August, 1942.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.