

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR  
BUREAU OF SAFETY

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ACCIDENT ON THE  
ST. LOUIS-SAN FRANCISCO RAILWAY

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WEST TULSA, OKLA.

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SEPTEMBER 14, 1938

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2292

SUMMARY

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Inv-2292

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Railroad: St. Louis-San Francisco  
Date: September 14, 1938.  
Location: West Tulsa, Okla.  
Kind of accident: Collision  
Trains involved: Yard cut : Yard cut  
Engine numbers: 3803 : 3804  
Consist: Engine with cut : Engine shov-  
of 5 cars ing 7 cars  
Speed: Standing : 4-6 m.p.h.  
Track: Tangent  
Weather: Clear  
Time: 11:45 p.m.  
Casualties: 2 injured  
Cause: Shoving a cut of cars along a lead  
without proper protection.

Inv-2292

October 6, 1938.

To the Commission:

On September 14, 1938, there was a collision between a cut of cars being shoved, and a stationary cut of cars coupled to a yard engine, on the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway at West Tulsa, Okla., which resulted in the injury of two employees.

#### Location and method of operation

This accident occurred in the West Tulsa yard located in the Tulsa Terminal which extends between Red Fork and Dawson, Okla., a distance of 8.8 miles. At West Tulsa the main yard lies west of the main tracks and consists of 29 tracks which extend northward and southward and vary in length from 721 feet to 8,020 feet. These tracks are numbered from east to west consecutively from 1 to 11, then a track designated 11½ is followed by tracks 12 to 28, inclusive. At the north end of the yard, tracks 1 to 11 are served by one lead while tracks 11½ to 28 are served by another lead known as the New Yard lead. Northward from a point about opposite the switch leading to track 4 the New Yard lead is known as the Coach Yard lead, and from this same point a scale track branches off the New Yard lead and parallels the Coach Yard lead. The New Yard lead is tangent and the grade is practically level. The accident occurred on the New Yard lead at a point approximately 260 feet south of the scale track switch.

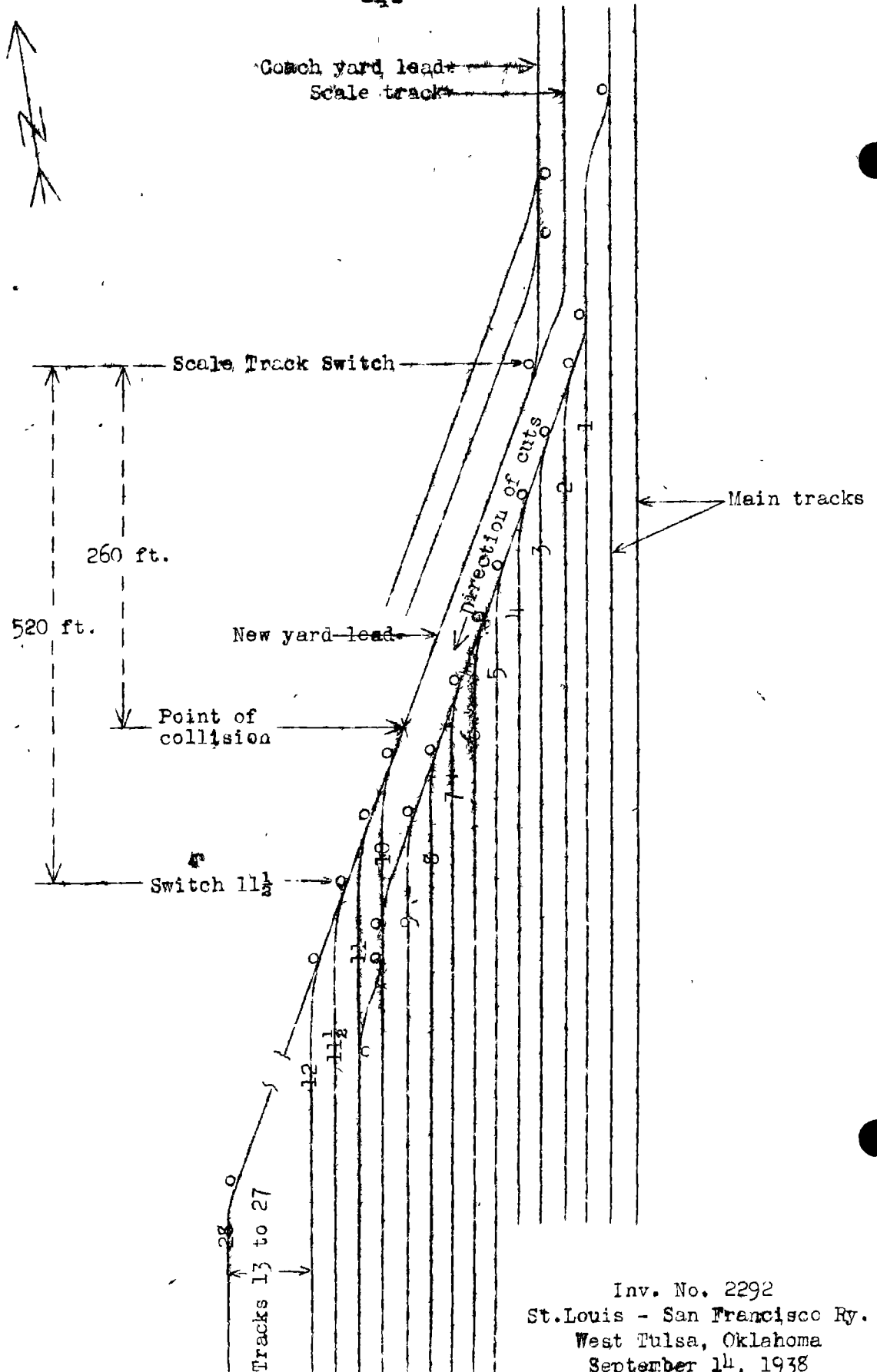
Special instructions contained in timetable 30c of the Tulsa Terminal provide that all switchmen must be on top of transfer trains or cuts passing through the yard and must be properly distributed to pass signals. Rule 1266 of the operating rules reads as follows:

Cars must not be shoved until a trainman or yardman has gone to the opposite end of cut of cars and given proper signal; a blind shove must never be made.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 11:45 p.m.

#### Description

Yard engine 3803, headed south, in charge of Engine Foreman Brockman and Engineman Clayton, pulled a caboose and four cars of oil along the Coach Yard lead to the clearance point of the switch leading to the scale track where it stopped to permit engine 3804 to pull a cut of cars on to the scale track. It then



Inv. No. 2292  
St. Louis - San Francisco Ry.  
West Tulsa, Oklahoma  
September 14, 1938

proceeded on the New Yard lead extension of the Coach Yard lead a distance of approximately 520 feet to the switch leading to track 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  where it stopped to permit the proper lining of that switch. While standing at that point it was struck by a cut of cars being shoved by engine 3804.

Yard engine 3804, headed south, in charge of Engine Foreman Hill and Engineman Hinch, pulled a cut of seven cars northward from the New Yard lead to the scale track where the cars were weighed. After the weighing had been completed the cut of cars was shoved southward from the scale track to the New Yard lead and had proceeded along that track a distance of about 260 feet, and while traveling at a speed estimated at between 4 and 6 miles per hour the head car of the cut collided with the rear car of the cut being handled by engine 3803.

#### Summary of evidence

Switchman Roach, of engine 3803, stated that when his engine, pulling five cars along the Coach Yard lead, reached the scale track it was necessary to stop because cars on the scale track were not in the clear. He had been on the rear car, but when this stop was made he went ahead and mounted the rear platform of the caboose, which was next to the engine. When the cars on the scale track had been moved into clear his cut moved along the New Yard lead until the engine reached the switch to track 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  where it again stopped. At that time Switchman Knight, of engine 3804, came to the caboose and had some conversation with him. Just after the conversation ended, Switchman Roach saw a high car coming off the scale track and at the same time Switchman Knight, who was then about a car length away, gave a slow signal and then a violent stop signal, and at that time the collision occurred. He did not see Switchman Knight give any proceed signal, and did not see anyone get off the south end of the approaching cut at or near the point of collision, but immediately after the accident he saw lights near engine 3804. He thought these lights were those of Conductor Hill and Switchman Conner. At the time of the accident his cut had been stationary about 3 or 4 minutes. The weather was clear and there were no conditions that would obstruct the view northward along the lead. He thought that inasmuch as his entire cut of cars was visible to him he was stationed as required by the special instruction.

The statements of Engine Foreman Brockman and Switchman Steadman, of engine 3803, contained no additional information except that the rear headlight of their engine was burning at the time of the accident.

Engineman Clayton, of engine 3803, stated that when he stopped his engine at the switch of track 11½ he found it necessary to make some adjustments in the cab, and while engaged in doing so their cut of cars was struck; they had been stationary about 2 or 3 minutes at the time of the accident. Although the engine brake was applied the force of the collision was sufficient to move the engine 6 or 8 feet.

Engine Foreman Hill, of engine 3804, stated that while he was engaged in weighing seven cars on the scale track, engine 3803 came along the Coach Yard lead, and when his cut cleared that track the other crew pulled past and Switchman Knight of his crew lined the switch back for the scale track. After weighing the cars was completed he walked toward the south end of his cut until he reached the third car from the engine, and seeing down the lead a lantern which he believed to be that of Switchman Knight, he gave his engineman a signal to shove ahead, although he had received no signal from the head end of the cut and could not himself see whether the lead was clear. He had boarded the third car from the engine and after the cut had been shoved several car lengths and he had received no signal from Switchman Knight he gave a stop signal but the collision occurred before the stop could be made. At the time of the accident his cut of cars was moving about 4 or 5 miles per hour. He had instructed Switchman Knight regarding the movements that were to be made following completion of the weighing, and thought that since his switchman was stationed on the lead in advance of the cut of cars it was not necessary that he himself walk to the head end of the cut before signaling the engine to move. He did not see any signal given by anyone until after the collision. He thought that engine 3803 passed his cut about 11:30 p.m. and that his cut started to move up the New Yard lead about 13 or 14 minutes later.

Switchman Knight, of engine 3804, stated that he boarded the cut of cars being handled by engine 3803 when that engine pulled past his cut at the scale track. He rode to the scale track switch and lined it for the movement from the scale track to the New Yard lead. He then walked south along the lead with the intention of lining such switches as might be necessary for the movements which Foreman Hill had told him were to be made after weighing had been completed. When he reached the caboose coupled to engine 3803 he had a short conversation with Switchman Roach who was on the rear platform. While this conversation was in progress the collision occurred. He could not recall having given any signal after leaving the scale track, and was certain that he had not given any signal to his foreman to start the cut ahead.

Engineman Hinch, of engine 3804, estimated the speed of his cut at the time of collision as between 4 and 6 miles per hour.

### Discussion

The evidence was to the effect that when the cut of cars being handled by engine 3803 passed the cut being weighed by engine 3804 one of the switchmen of the crew of engine 3804 boarded the passing cut and rode to the scale track switch which he lined for the movement of his cut from the scale track to the New Yard lead. He then walked southward along the lead for the purpose of lining any other switches necessary for the movements to be made after weighing had been completed. When the weighing had been completed the foreman of engine 3804 started to walk to the head end of his cut before giving a signal to his engineman to move the cut ahead, but seeing the lantern of his switchman some distance up the lead he thought the movement ahead was being protected, and without waiting to receive a proceed signal from the switchman stationed ahead of the cut he signaled his engineman to move ahead. After the cut had been moved ahead several car lengths and no signal was received from the switchman, the foreman gave a signal to stop but before it could be obeyed the collision occurred.

After passing engine 3804, engine 3803 with its cut moved along the New Yard lead to the switch leading to track 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  and stopped to permit that switch to be lined properly for the movement to be made. While standing at this point the engineman found it necessary to make some adjustments in the cab so that there was a delay of several minutes. During the course of this delay the switchman of engine 3804 passed the rear end of the cut being handled by engine 3803 and engaged in conversation with a member of the crew of that engine who was on the caboose directly behind the engine. He gave no signal to his foreman to indicate that he was protecting the movement from the scale track along the New Yard lead, and was not aware that the movement had been started until the collision occurred.

### Conclusion

This accident was caused by shoving a cut of cars along a lead without proper protection.

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. PATTERSON,

Director.