

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2821
THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT POCATELLO, IDAHO, ON
AUGUST 29, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Union Pacific
Date: August 29, 1944 .
Location: Pocatello, Idaho
Kind of accident: Rear-end collision
Trains involved: Freight : Engine
Train numbers: Fourth 160 : Extra 9506 East
Engine numbers: 9081 : 9506
Consist: 88 cars, caboose :
Estimated speed: Standing : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable, train orders and
automatic block-signal
system; yard limits
Track: Double; tangent; level
Weather: Clear
Time: 4:30 a. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 4 injured
Cause: Failure properly to control
speed of following train
moving within yard limits

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2821

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

THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

September 30, 1944.

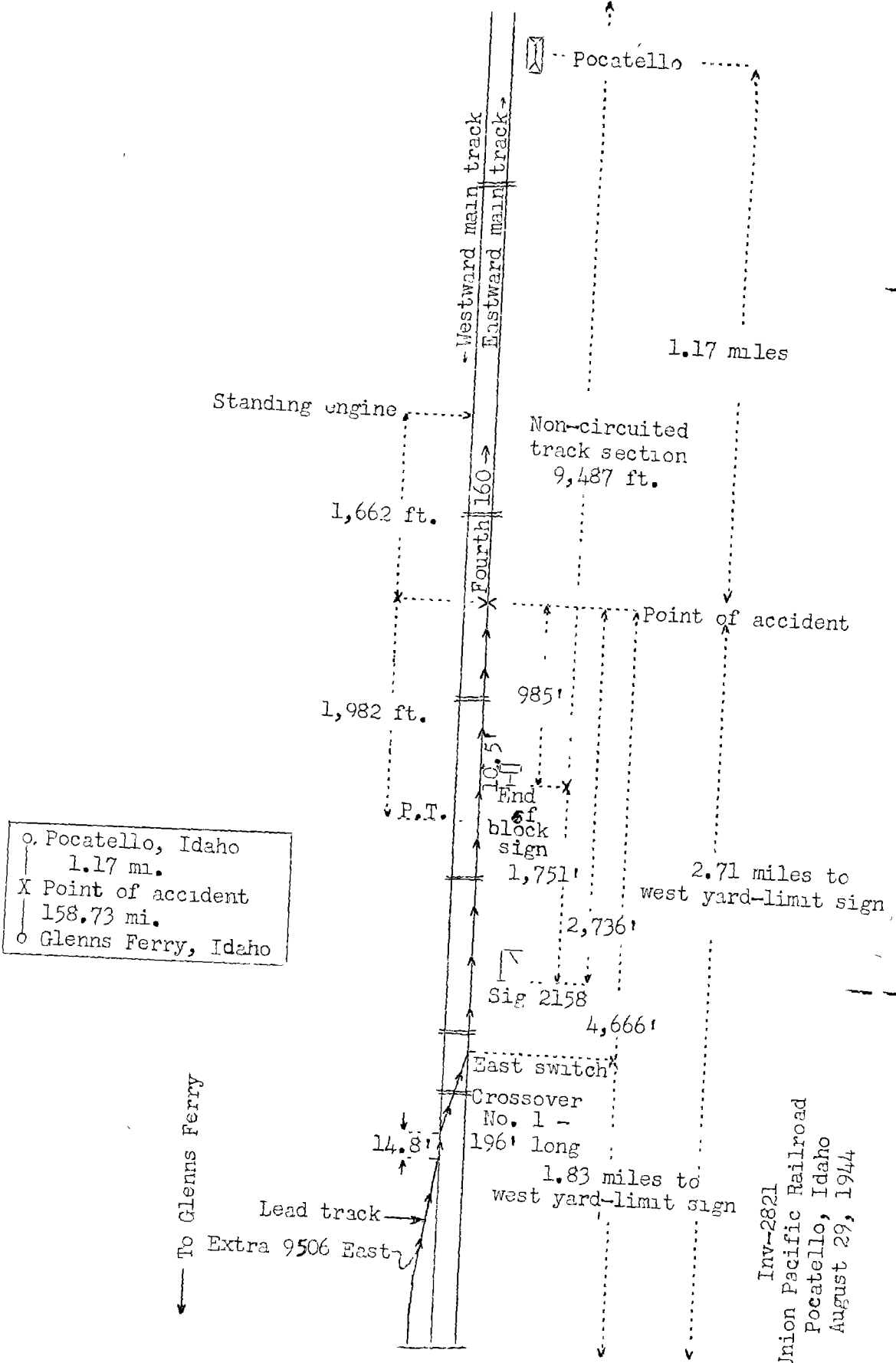
Accident at Pocatello, Idaho, on August 29, 1944, caused
by failure properly to control the speed of the
following train moving within yard limits.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ¹

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On August 29, 1944, there was a rear-end collision between a freight train and an engine on the Union Pacific Railroad at Pocatello, Idaho, which resulted in the death of one employee on duty, and the injury of one person carried under contract, one employee on duty and two employees off duty.

¹Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and disposition.



o Pocatello, Idaho
 1.17 mi.
 X Point of accident
 158.73 mi.
 o Glens Ferry, Idaho

Inv-2821
 Union Pacific Railroad
 Pocatello, Idaho
 August 29, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Idaho Division designated as the Third Subdivision and extending eastward from Glens Ferry to Pocatello, Idaho, 159.9 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a double-track line over which trains were operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. The accident occurred within yard limits on the eastward main track 1.17 miles west of the station at Pocatello and 2.71 miles east of the west yard-limit sign. The main tracks were tangent throughout a distance of 1,982 feet west of the point of accident and a considerable distance eastward. The grade for east-bound trains varied between 0.10 and 0.50 percent ascending throughout a distance of about 3,000 feet, then it was level 375 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance eastward.

The east switch of a trailing-point crossover 196 feet long, hereinafter referred to as crossover No. 1, which connected the main tracks, was 1.83 miles east of the west yard-limit sign. The east switch of a lead track, which connected the westward main track and a freight classification yard, was 14.8 feet west of the west switch of crossover No. 1.

Automatic signal 2158, which governed east-bound movements on the eastward main track, was 2,736 feet west of the point of accident. This signal was of the one-arm, two-position, lower-quadrant type, and was continuously lighted. The night aspects, and the corresponding indications and names of this signal were as follows:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
Red	Stop.	Stop Signal.
Green	Proceed.	Clear Signal.

The controlling track circuit on the eastward main track extended 1,751 feet east of signal 2158, and the section from this point eastward throughout a distance of 9,487 feet was non-circuited. The non-circuited section extended between points 11,771 feet and 2,284 feet west of the east end of the Third Subdivision. At the eastern end of the controlling track circuit of signal 2158, a sign was located 10.5 feet south of the south rail of the eastward main track. This sign bore the words "End of Block". When a train occupied the eastward main track between signal 2158 and the end-of-block sign, signal 2158 would display stop. When a train passed beyond the end-of-block sign, signal 2158 would display proceed.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS.

* * *

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or switch not properly lined, and be on lookout for broken rail, or anything that may affect movement of train.

93. Within yard limits the main track may be used, protecting against first-class trains.

* * *

All trains and engines must move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the track is seen or known to be clear. * * *

509. When a train is stopped by a Stop signal * * * it may proceed * * *

* * *

(c) On two or more tracks, after stopping, two long blasts of engine whistle must be sounded, and train may proceed at once at restricted speed through the entire block to the next home signal.

Description of Accident

Fourth 160, an east-bound freight train, consisting of engine 9081, 88 cars and a caboose, stopped on the eastward main track at Pocatello about 4:20 a. m., with the rear end standing 2.71 miles east of the west yard-limit sign and 985 feet east of the end-of-block sign. About 10 minutes later the rear end was struck by Extra 9506 East.

Extra 9506 East, an east-bound engine, headed westward, moved eastward from the lead track to the westward main track, thence through crossover No. 1 to the eastward main track, passed signal 2158, which displayed proceed, passed the end-of-block sign, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it struck the rear end of Fourth 160.

The caboose of Fourth 160 was demolished. The rear car of Fourth 160 and the tender of engine 9506 were slightly damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 4:30 a. m.

The flagman of Fourth 160 was killed. The conductor of Fourth 160, and an engineer and a brakeman, who were deadheading in the caboose of Fourth 160, were injured.

Discussion

The rules of this carrier governing operation within yard limits provide that all trains and engines must be operated prepared to stop unless the way is seen or known to be clear.

About 10 minutes after Fourth 160 stopped, its rear end was struck by Extra 9506 East. The collision occurred within yard limits, and, under the rules, the speed of Extra 9506 was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction.

When Fourth 160 stopped, the conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The marker lamps on the caboose were lighted and displayed red to the rear. The conductor said the first he knew of anything being wrong was when the collision occurred. The flagman was killed.

The crew of Extra 9506 consisted of the engineer and the fireman. The engine was moving in backward motion. It was not equipped with a headlight on the rear of its tender. This train entered the eastward main track at crossover No. 1, and had proceeded eastward a distance of about 4,600 feet at a speed of about 10 miles per hour when it struck Fourth 160. The engineer and the fireman said that they were maintaining a lookout ahead, but they did not see the preceding train until the lighted red markers were observed a few feet distant. Then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the brakes became effective. The engineer said that throughout a considerable distance immediately west of the point of accident the reflection of the headlight of an engine, which was standing on the westward main track at a point about 1,600 feet east of the rear end of Fourth 160, materially restricted his vision, but the fireman said the reflection of the headlight did not restrict his view of the track ahead. Both engineers said that coal dust blowing from the tender of the engine interfered with their vision to some extent. They understood that, under the rules, the speed of their engine was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction. The engineer said, in substance, that if the automatic block system had extended far enough eastward for some portion of the other train to be on the track circuit, he would have received definite information that the track was occupied, but that the signal indication would not have been more restrictive than the yard-limit rule.

Cause

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

Dated at Washington, D. C., this thirtieth day of September, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.