INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2781

THE WABASH RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR ASHLAND AVE. STATION, CHICAGO, ILL., ON

MARCH 3, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad:	Wabash	
Date:	March 3, 1944	
Location:	Ashland Ave. Station, Chicago, Ill.	
Kind of accident:	Rear-end collision	
Trains involved:	Freight	: Engine
Train numbers:	Extra 1534 North	: Extra 2802 North
Engine numbers:	1534	: 2802
Consist:	20 cars, 2 cabooses	:
Estimated speed:	Standing	: 15 m. p. h.
Operation:	Timetable and automatic block-signal system; yard limits	
Track:	Double; tangent; 0.064 percent descending grade northward	
Weather:	Raining	
Time:	About 11:35 p. m.	
Casualties:	1 killed; 2 injured	
Cause:	Failure properly to control speed of following train moving within yard limits	

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2781

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

THE WABASH RAILROAD COMPANY

April 12, 1944.

Accident near Ashland Ave. Station, Chicago, Ill., on March 3, 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 March 3, 1944, there was a rear-end collision between a freight train and an engine on the Wabash Railroad near Ashland Ave. Station, Chicago, Ill., which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of two employees off duty. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

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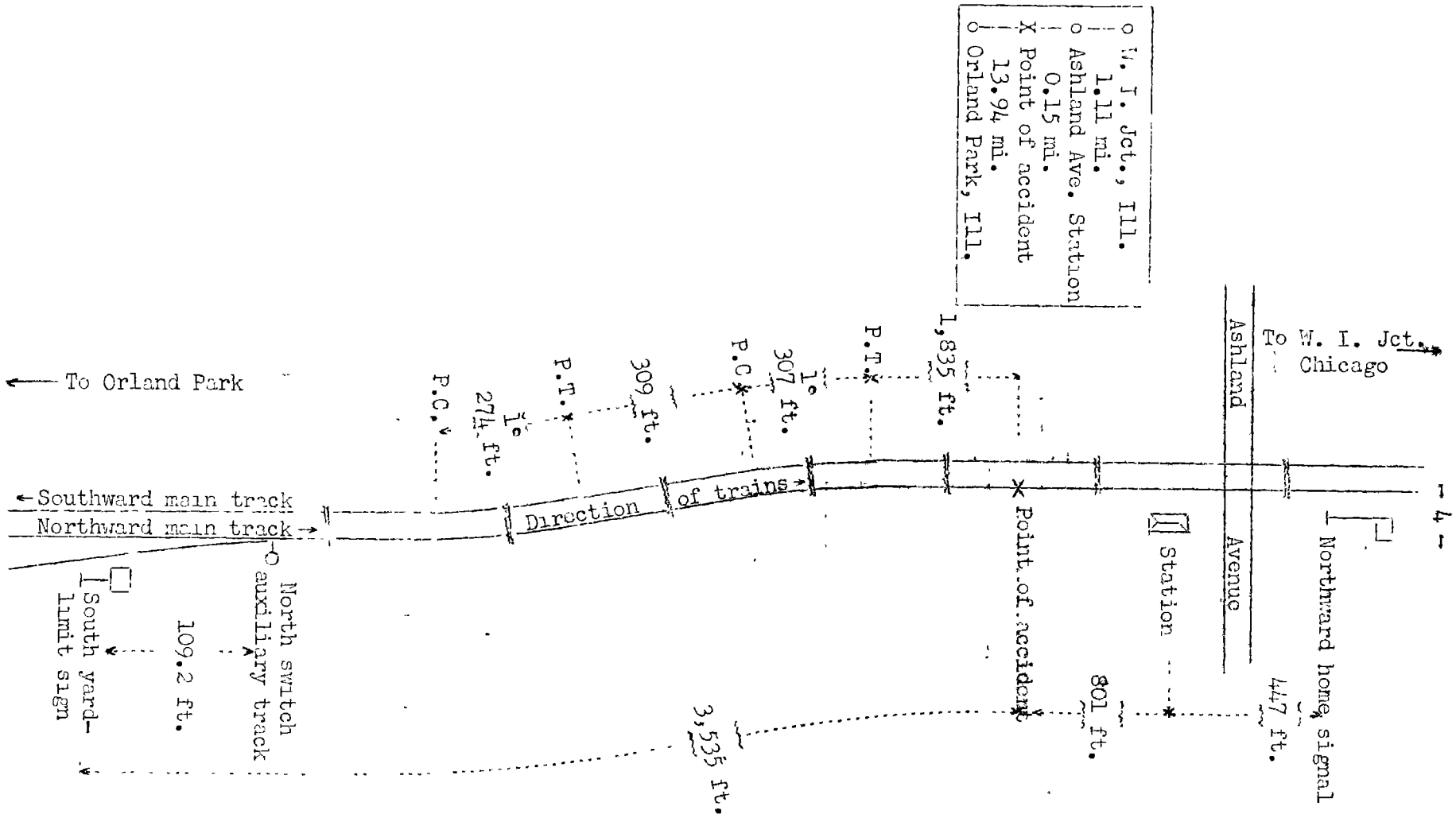
[1]Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and disposition.



Inv-2781
Wabash Railroad
Ashland Ave. Station, Chicago, Ill.
March 3, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Decatur Division extending between Orland Park and W. I. Jct., Chicago, Ill., 15.2 miles. This was a double-track line over which trains moving with the current of traffic were operated by timetable and an automatic block system. The accident occurred within yard limits on the northward main track 801 feet south of Ashland Ave. Station and 3,535 feet north of the south yard-limit sign. From the south there were, in succession, a 1° curve to the left 274 feet in length, a tangent 309 feet, a 1° curve to the right 307 feet and a tangent 1,835 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance northward. The grade for north-bound trains varied between 0.0132 and 0.69 percent ascending 2,100 feet, then it was 0.064 percent descending 484 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance beyond.

The north switch of an auxiliary track, which paralleled the northward main track on the east, was 109.2 feet north of the south yard-limit sign.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

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

Second and third class and extra trains (including engines and passenger extras) must move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear.

* * *

NOTE.--Interpretation placed on "seen or known to be clear" is that trains or engines affected will be operated within yard limits to stop within range of vision.

Description of Accident

Extra 1534 North, a north-bound freight train, consisting of engine 1534, 20 cars and cabooses 2746 and 2674, in the order named, stopped at Ashland Ave. Station about 11:30 p. m., at the northward home signal, which was displaying stop. About 5 minutes later the rear end was struck by Extra 2802 North.

Extra 2802 North, a north-bound engine, headed southward, entered the northward main track at the auxiliary track switch and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it struck the rear end of Extra 1534 North.

Cabooses 2746 and 2674 were considerably damaged and the rear car was slightly damaged. The tender of engine 2802 was slightly damaged.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 11:35 p. m.

The employees killed and injured were deadheading and were occupying caboose 2746.

Discussion

The rules of this carrier governing operation within yard limits provide that second-class and third-class trains, extra trains and engines must be operated in such manner that they can be stopped within the distance of the range of vision.

About 5 minutes after Extra 1534 North stopped, its rear end was struck by Extra 2802 North. The collision occurred within yard limits; and, under the rules, the speed of Extra 2802 was required to be so controlled that it could be stopped short of a train or an obstruction.

Soon after Extra 1534 stopped, the flagman was standing about 150 feet south of the rear end of the train and the conductor was on the rear platform of the rear caboose. These employees said that the marker lamps on the rear caboose were lighted and displayed red to the rear when the accident occurred. They saw the reflection of the headlight on the tender of the approaching engine when it was about 1,800 feet distant. When the engine was about 300 feet south of the rear end of their train they made an unsuccessful attempt to stop the approaching engine by giving stop signals with lighted white lanterns and red lanterns.

The crew of Extra 2802 consisted of the engineer and the fireman. The engine was moving in backward motion. This train entered the northward main track at the auxiliary track switch and had proceeded northward a distance of about 3,400 feet at a speed of about 15 miles per hour when it struck Extra 1534. The engineer and the fireman said they were maintaining a lookout ahead, but they did not see the preceding train from the time their train entered the northward main track to the time of the collision. There was no condition of the engine which distracted their attention or obstructed their view of the track ahead. It was raining but not sufficiently to affect visibility. The engineer saw stop signals being given with lighted red lanterns and white lanterns from a point about 10 feet from the engine, and he moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the brakes became effective.

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 twelfth day of April, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.