

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

---

INVESTIGATION NO. 2665  
THE WHEELING AND LAKE ERIE RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR NEW CUMBERLAND, OHIO, ON  
JANUARY 1, 1943

---

SUMMARY

---

Railroad: Wheeling and Lake Erie  
Date: January 1, 1943  
Location: New Cumberland, Ohio  
Kind of accident: Head-end collision  
Trains involved: Pennsylvania freight: Pennsylvania freight  
Train numbers: Extra 7088 West : Extra 9448 East  
Engine numbers: 7088 : 9448-9911  
Consist: 41 cars, cabooses : 52 cars, cabooses  
Estimated speed: 12-38 m. p. n. : 16-35 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable and train orders  
Track: Single; 2°15' curve; 0.15 percent ascending grade westward  
Weather: Cloudy  
Time: 4:35 a. m.  
Casualties: 3 killed; 12 injured  
Cause: Accident caused by failure to obey a meet order  
Recommendation: That the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway Company establish an adequate block-signal system on the line involved in this accident

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

---

INVESTIGATION NO. 2665

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

THE WHEELING AND LAKE ERIE RAILWAY COMPANY

---

February 13, 1943.

---

Accident near New Cumberland, Ohio, on January 1, 1943,  
caused by failure to obey a meet order.

---

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

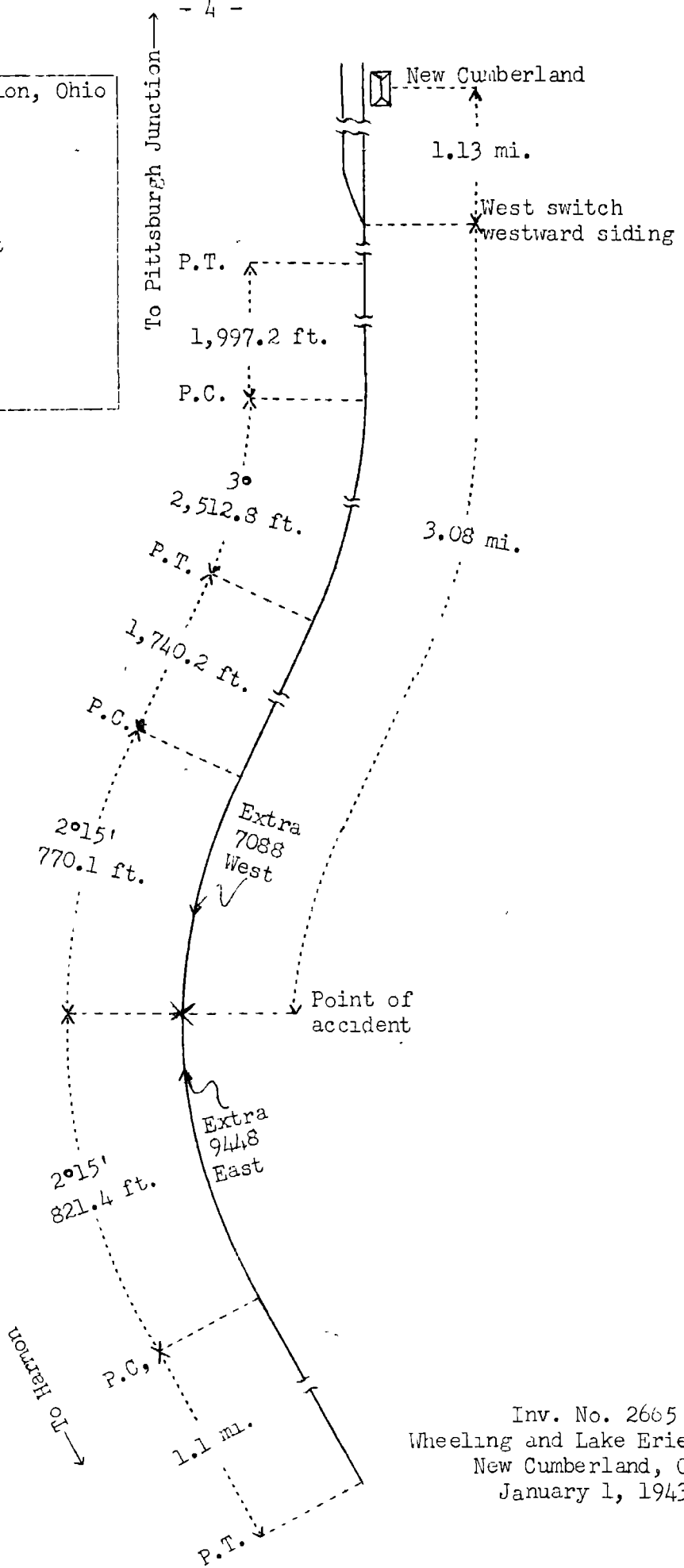
PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 1, 1943, there was a head-end collision between two Pennsylvania Railroad freight trains on the line of the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway Company near New Cumberland, Ohio, which resulted in the death of 2 Pennsylvania Railroad employees and 1 Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway employee, and the injury of 9 Pennsylvania Railroad employees and 3 Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

---

<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 Pittsburgh Junction, Ohio  
21.10 mi.
- o Sherrodsville  
5.40 mi.
- o New Cumberland  
4.21 mi.
- X Point of accident  
0.79 mi.
- o Valley Junction  
13.00 mi.
- o Lonas  
1.10 mi.
- o Harmon, Ohio



Inv. No. 2665  
 Wheeling and Lake Erie Ry.  
 New Cumberland, Ohio  
 January 1, 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Toledo Division extending between Pittsburgh Junction and Harmon, Ohio, a distance of 45.6 miles. Between Lonas, 1.1 miles east of Harmon, and Pittsburgh Junction this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. Trains of the Pittsburgh & West Virginia Railway are regularly operated over this portion of the railroad and, because of flood conditions on a line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Pennsylvania Railroad trains involved were being operated over this line. At New Cumberland a siding 5,304 feet in length parallels the main track on the north. The west switch of this siding is 1.13 miles west of the station. The accident occurred at a point 3.08 miles west of the west siding-switch. Approaching from the east there are, in succession, a tangent 1,997.2 feet in length, a 3° curve to the right 2,512.8 feet, a tangent 1,740.2 feet and a 2°15' curve to the left 770.1 feet to the point of accident. Approaching from the west there is a tangent 1.1 miles in length, which is followed by a 2°15' curve to the right 821.4 feet to the point of accident. At the point of accident the grade is 0.15 percent ascending westward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

95. \* \* \*

Extra trains must not be run without an order from the Superintendent.

FORMS OF TRAIN ORDERS

Form A. Fixing Meeting Points for Opposing Trains

\* \* \*

Examples.

(1) \* \* \*

Extra 99 North will meet Extra 100 South at Milan.

\* \* \*

Trains receiving these orders will run with respect to each other to the designated points and there meet in the manner provided by the Rules.

The maximum authorized speed for the trains involved is 50 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 7088 West, a west-bound Pennsylvania Railroad freight train, consisted at the time of the accident of engine 7088, 31 loaded and 10 empty cars and a caboose. At Pittsburgh Junction, 26.5 miles east of New Cumberland, the crew received a clearance card and copies of seven train orders, of which one was train order No. 4, Form 19, reading in part as follows:

P Co Eng 7088 will run extra  
Pgh Jct to Lonas \* \* \*

This train departed from Pittsburgh Junction at 1:50 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains. At Sherrodsville, 5.4 miles east of New Cumberland and the last open office, the crew received a clearance card and copies of train order No. 16, Form 19, reading in part as follows:

Eng PWV 1001 and P Co Eng 9440  
will run Exa Lonas to Pgh Jct  
will meet \* \* \* P Co Exa 7088  
West \* \* \* at New Cumberland  
\* \* \* P Co Exa 7088 West \* \* \*  
take siding \* \* \*

Soon after this order was completed, a message was issued that engine 9448 would be substituted for engine 9440 on order No. 16. Extra 7088 departed from Sherrodsville at 3:13 a. m., and stopped in the siding at New Cumberland about 4 a. m., where it was required to wait until Extra 1001 East and Extra 9448 East had been met. About 20 minutes later, after Extra 1001 East had passed the west siding-switch, Extra 7088 West departed and while moving at a speed variously estimated as 12 to 38 miles per hour it collided with Extra 9443 East at a point 3.08 miles west of the west siding-switch at New Cumberland.

Extra 9443 East, an east-bound Pennsylvania Railroad freight train, consisted at the time of the accident of engines 9443 and 9911, 52 loaded cars and a caboose. At Harmon, 19.1 miles west of New Cumberland, the crew received a clearance card and copies of five train orders, of which one was train order No. 16, Form 19, previously quoted. This train departed from Harmon at 3:45 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, departed from Valley Junction, 5 miles west of New Cumberland and the last open office, at 4:34 a. m., and while moving, at a speed variously estimated as 16 to 35 miles per hour it collided with Extra 7088 West.

From an engine moving in either direction, in the vicinity of the point of accident, the view of a train approaching from the opposite direction is restricted to a distance of about 400 feet, because of embankments adjacent to the track and track curvature.

The front end of the engine of Extra 7088 West was crushed inward and the cab was demolished. The cistern was torn from the frame of the tender. The first car was demolished. The second car was derailed, and stopped upright and parallel to the track. The front end of the first engine of Extra 9448 East was crushed inward and the cab was demolished. The tender of the first engine was demolished and wedged under the driving wheels of the second engine. The tender of the second engine was badly damaged. The first to seventh cars, inclusive, were derailed and stopped in various positions. Of these cars, one was demolished and the remainder were badly damaged. The front truck of the eighth car was derailed.

It was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred at 4:35 a. m.

The employees killed were the engineer of Extra 7088 West, and the engineer-pilot and the engineer of the first engine of Extra 9448 East. The employees injured were the engineer-pilot, the fireman, the front brakeman, the conductor-pilot and the flagman of Extra 7088 West, and the fireman of the first engine, the engineer and the fireman of the second engine, the front brakeman, the conductor-pilot, the conductor and the flagman of Extra 9448 East.

#### Data

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 25.88 trains.

#### Discussion

The rules governing operation on the line involved provide that extra trains, with respect to opposing extra trains, will be governed by train orders.

The investigation disclosed that the crews of both trains involved held copies of train order No. 16, which established New Cumberland as the meeting point between Extra 7088 West and Extras 1001 and 9448 East. Extra 7088 West and Extra 9448 East were trains of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the crews were not familiar with the territory involved. Each of these trains was in the charge of a conductor-pilot and an engineer-pilot, who were experienced employees of the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway. Extra 7088 met Extra 1001 at New Cumberland, then it proceeded and collided with Extra 9448 at a point about 3 miles west of the west siding-switch. The view had by the members of the crews on the engines of both trains of the point where the accident occurred was restricted to a distance of about 400 feet. Action to stop their respective trains was taken by the engineer-pilots, but the distance was not sufficient to stop short of the point of collision.

Train order No. 16 was received by the crew of Extra 7088 West at Sherrodsville, 5.4 miles east of New Cumberland. According to the statements of the engineer-pilot and the conductor-pilot of Extra 7088, they read and understood the order. The engineer-pilot said that when Extra 1001 was approaching New Cumberland, his train had been in the siding about 20 minutes and during that period he was engaged in assisting the fireman in moving coal to the front end of the tender. When the rear of Extra 1001 cleared the west siding-switch, Extra 7088 departed and the engineer-pilot said he was not aware that he had overlooked Extra 9448 until the accident occurred. The conductor-pilot said that his copy of order No. 16 had been misplaced after he read it at Sherrodsville and he was attempting to find it when the accident occurred. Because they were not familiar with the territory involved, the other surviving members of the crew of Extra 7088 said they were depending upon the conductor-pilot and the engineer-pilot to comply with the rules.

On the line involved in this accident, trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. If an adequate block system had been in use on this line, this accident would not have occurred.

#### Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to obey a meet order.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway Company establish an adequate block-signal system on the line involved in this accident.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this thirteenth day of February, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.