

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2509

THE CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO & ST. LOUIS  
RAILWAY COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR WYTON, ILL., ON

JUNE 25, 1941

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## SUMMARY

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Railroad: Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis  
Date: June 25, 1941  
Location: Wyton, Ill.  
Kind of accident: Head-end collision  
Trains involved: Freight :Deadhead passenger  
:equipment  
Train numbers: Extra 2385 South :Extra 4889 North  
Engine numbers: 2385 :4889  
Consist: 77 cars and caboose :1 car  
Speed: 10 m.p.h. :20-25 m.p.h.  
Operation: Timetable, train orders and manual-block  
system; accident occurred within yard  
limits  
Track: Single; 1° curve; 0.35 percent ascending  
grade southward  
Weather: Clear  
Time: About 6:06 p.m.  
Casualties: 4 killed; 2 injured  
Cause: Accident caused by failure properly to  
control speed of both trains while they  
were moving within yard limits  
Recommendation: That operating officials of the  
Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago &  
St. Louis Railway Company immediately  
take necessary measures to obtain a  
common understanding and proper  
observance of the rules

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2509

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

THE CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO & ST. LOUIS  
RAILWAY COMPANY

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September 12, 1941.

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Accident near Wyton, Ill., on June 25, 1941, caused by  
failure properly to control speed of both trains  
while they were moving within yard limits.

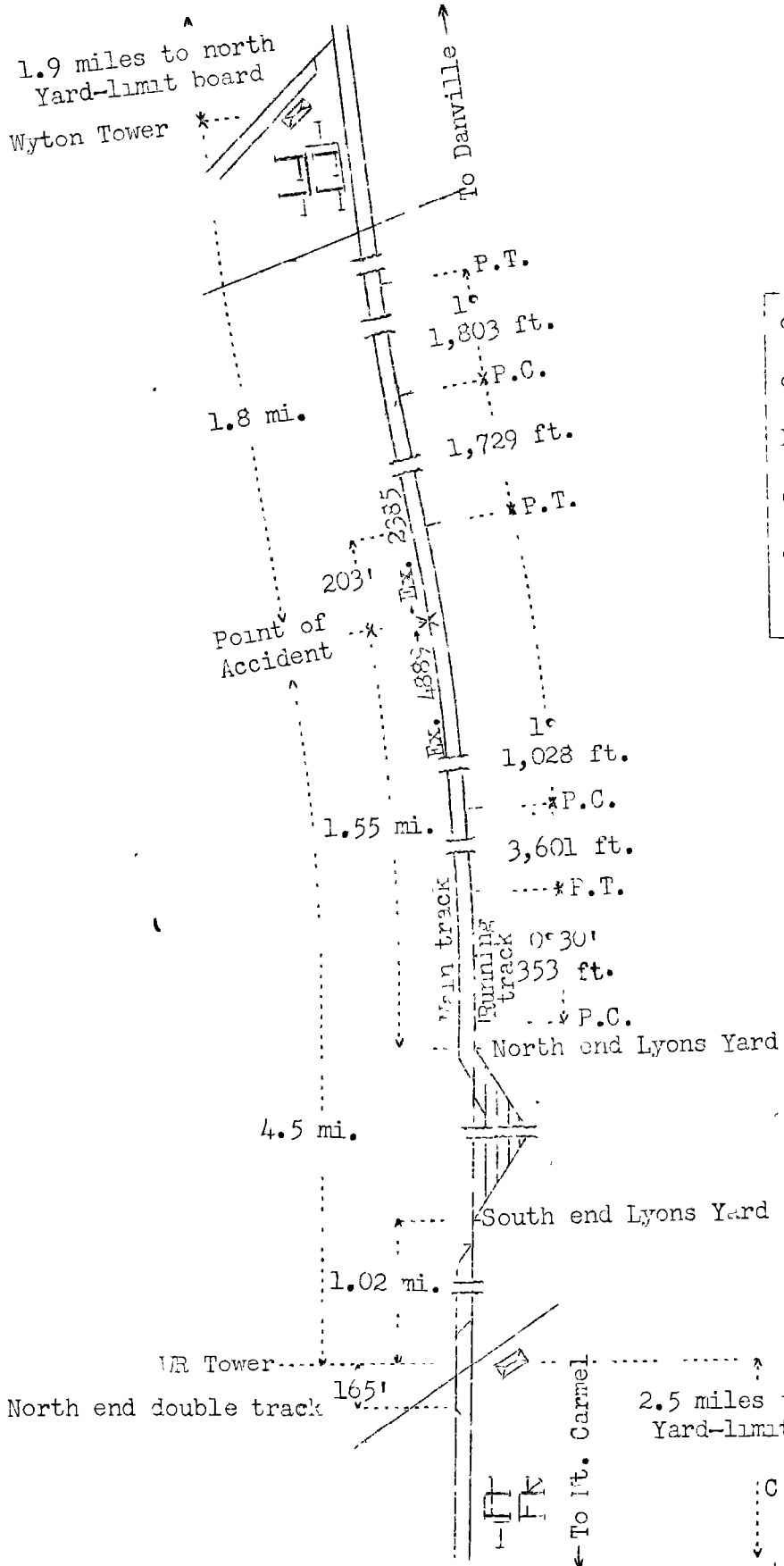
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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On June 25, 1941, there was a head-end collision between a Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway deadhead passenger-equipment train and a New York Central Railroad freight train on the line of the first-mentioned carrier near Wyton, Ill., which resulted in the death of four employees and the injury of two employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

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<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.

1.9 miles to north  
Yard-limit board  
Wyton Tower



- Danville, Ill. 0.9 mi.
- Wyton 1.8 mi.
- X Point of accident 4.5 mi.
- VR 29.9 mi.
- Midland 88.4 mi.
- Mt. Carmel, Ill.

Inv-2509  
 C., C., C. & St. L. Ry.  
 Wyton, Ill.  
 June 25, 1941

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

Trains of the New York Central Railroad, hereinafter referred to as the N.Y.C., are operated over the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway, hereinafter referred to as the C.C.C. & St.L., within the Danville Terminal, which extends between Danville, Ill., and WR tower, a distance of 7.2 miles. This accident occurred on that part of the Illinois Division which extends between Danville and Mt. Carmel, Ill., a distance of 125.5 miles. Wyton and WR tower are, respectively, 0.9 and 7.2 miles south of Danville. In the immediate vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and a manual-block system. The accident occurred on the main track within yard limits at a point about 1.8 miles south of the tower at Wyton and 4.5 miles north of WR tower. A classification yard, designated as Lyons yard, lies east of the main track. The north end of this yard is 3.35 miles south of Wyton and the south end is 1.02 miles north of WR tower. A running track parallels the main track on the east between Wyton and the north end of this yard. Another running track parallels the main track on the east between WR tower and the south end of the yard. The north end of double track is 165 feet south of WR tower.

As the point of accident is approached from the north there are, in succession, a  $1^{\circ}$  curve to the left 1,803 feet in length, a tangent 1,729 feet, and a  $1^{\circ}$  curve to the right 203 feet to the point of accident and 825 feet beyond. As the point of accident is approached from the south there is a  $0^{\circ}30'$  curve to the right 353 feet in length, a tangent 3,601 feet, and the curve on which the accident occurred. At the point of accident the grade for south-bound trains is 0.35 percent ascending.

In the vicinity of the point of accident, the track is laid in a cut about 16 feet in depth and 5,300 feet in length. At points 858 and 303 feet, respectively, south of the point of accident overhead bridges extend over the main track. The west abutments of these bridges are located at clearance distance from the west rail of the main track.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

DEFINITIONS

FIXED SIGNAL.--A signal of fixed location indicating a condition affecting the movement of a train.  
Note.\* \* \* The definition of a "Fixed Signal" covers such signals as \* \* \*, yard limit boards, \* \* \* or other means of displaying indications that govern the movement of a train.

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

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

Time-table special instructions provide as follows:

305. MANUAL BLOCK SYSTEM

Manual Block System is in use:

Single Track:

Between \* \* \*

Danville, Ill., and WR  
\* \* \*

Single and Two Tracks:

Rules 317-B, 318-B and 331-B do not govern within yard limits.

Indications of manual block signals will convey to second class and extra trains, information as to condition of that portion of the block that is not within yard limits. Second class and extra trains must move within yard limits prepared to stop, unless the main track is seen or known to be clear.

\* \* \*

Note.- Rules 317-B, 318-B and 331-B authorize absolute block for opposing movements and permissive block for following movements of trains other than passenger trains.

In the vicinity of the point of accident the maximum authorized speed for passenger trains is 60 miles per hour and for freight trains 40 miles per hour.

The north yard-limit sign is 1.9 miles north of Wyton, and the south yard-limit sign is 2.5 miles south of WR tower.

Description of Accident

Extra 4889, a north-bound C.C.C. & St.L. Ry. deadhead passenger-equipment train, consisted of N.Y.C. engine 4889 and one coach of steel construction. This train departed from

Midland, 36.2 miles south of Wyton, at 5:27 p.m., according to the train sheet. At WR tower, 6.3 miles south of Wyton and the last open office, it received a signal indication that permitted it to proceed through the interlocking at that station. It passed from double track to single track at 5:57 p.m. and was routed on the main track from WR tower to Wyton. While this train was moving at a speed estimated as 20 to 25 miles per hour, it collided with Extra 2385 South at a point 4.5 miles north of WR tower.

Extra 2385, a south-bound N.Y.C. freight train, consisted of engine 2385, 3 loaded and 74 empty cars and a caboose. This train entered the line of the C.C.C. & St.L. Ry. at Danville at 5:58 p.m., according to the train sheet, and received a signal indication at Wyton that permitted it to proceed through the interlocking at that station. It was routed on the main track from Wyton, the last open office, to the north end of Lyons yard, at 6:02 p.m., and while moving at a speed estimated as about 10 miles per hour collided with Extra 4889 North. The brakes of both trains had been tested and had functioned properly en route.

Because of the cut, the track curvature and the bridge abutments in the vicinity of the point of accident, the view of an approaching north-bound engine from the right side of a south-bound engine is restricted to 652 feet and from the left side to 278 feet. The view of an approaching south-bound engine from the right side of a north-bound engine is restricted to 527 feet, and from the left side to 597 feet.

The front end of engine 4889 telescoped the front end of engine 2385 about 7 feet. Engine 4889 was derailed to the left and stopped on the roadbed and leaned to the left at an angle of about 20 degrees. The engine was so badly damaged that it was cut into scrap. The front truck of the tender was derailed. The coach was slightly damaged. The engine truck and all driving wheels of engine 2385 were derailed but the engine remained upright. The smokebox and the engine truck were demolished. The pilot, the front-end engine frame and the entire cylinder assembly were broken off. The cab was shifted forward on the boiler. The first eight cars were derailed and stopped, badly damaged, in various positions on each side of the track.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6:06 p.m.

The employees killed were the engineman and the fireman of Extra 4889 and the fireman and the front brakeman of Extra 2385. The employees injured were the conductor and the flagman of Extra 4889.

### Discussion

The investigation discloses that under the yard-limit rule extra trains are required to move within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear. Of the five surviving members of the crews involved, four of them understood that interlocking signal indications received at WR tower and Wyton governed movement through the interlockings only, that extra trains must proceed between these points prepared to stop short of an obstruction, and that manual-block rules were not in effect for any but first-class trains. The other member thought manual-block rules governed the movement of all trains between Wyton and WR tower. The operator at Wyton and the operator at WR tower understood that they were required to block only first-class trains and that the yard-limit rule governed the movement of the trains involved in this accident. For many years these operators had blocked only first-class trains. The road foreman of engines understood that the yard-limit rule governed the movement of the trains involved. The superintendent indicated that both the yard-limit rule and the manual-block rules governed the operation of these trains. It is possible that one or more of the four employees killed in the accident did not have a definite understanding of the method of operation between Wyton and WR tower.

The conductor of Extra 4889 North thought his train was being operated in compliance with the yard-limit rule, because it was moving at less than 60 miles per hour, the maximum authorized speed for passenger trains. However, this was not a passenger train. The engineman of Extra 2385 South thought his train was being operated prepared to stop short of a standing train but not short of a train approaching from the opposite direction, and the conductor thought the train was moving prepared to stop short of an obstruction. The road foreman of engines said the trains involved should not have exceeded a speed of 8 or 10 miles per hour in the vicinity of the point where the accident occurred. Since the average speed of the south-bound train from Wyton to the point of accident was about 27 miles per hour and the average speed of the north-bound train from WR tower to the point of accident was 30 miles per hour, and considering the extent of the resultant damage, it is obvious the speed of one or both of the trains was underestimated.

The confusion concerning the exact method of operation between W.R. tower and Wyton probably is accounted for partially by the fact the timetable first states that certain manual-block rules are in effect between Danville and WR tower, and a few lines below it states in effect that these rules do not govern within yard limits and that manual-block signal indications will not convey to extra trains block information for



that portion of a block within yard limits. Since all the line between Wyton and WR tower was within yard limits, the signal indications did not convey block information to the trains involved in the accident.

The employees involved had been examined on operating rules within the past year, but it is apparent from this investigation that the instructions on the rules and the enforcement of them have not been sufficient to obtain a common understanding of the rules. If the employees and the officials had had a common understanding of the rules pertaining to the method of operation in the territory involved and if the rules had been properly enforced, it is probable this accident would have been averted.

#### Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure properly to control the speed of both trains while they were moving within yard limits.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that operating officials of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway Company immediately take necessary measures to obtain a common understanding and proper observance of the rules.

Dated at Washington, D.C., this twelfth day of September, 1941.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.