

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2792
THE WABASH RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR GALLATIN, MO., ON
APRIL 11, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Wabash

Date: April 11, 1944

Location: Gallatin, Mo.

Kind of accident: Head-end collision

Trains involved: Passenger : Freight

Train numbers: 11 : 92

Engine numbers: 698 : 2063

Consist: 6 cars : 19 cars, caboose

Speed: Practically : 18 m. p. h.
stopped

Operation: Timetable and train orders,
and manual-block system for
following movements only

Track: Single; 2°45' curve; 0.163
percent descending grade eastward

Weather: Raining

Time: 2:18 a. m.

Casualties: 4 injured

Cause: Inferior train occupying main track
on time of opposing superior train

Recommendation: That the Wabash Railroad Company
establish an adequate block system
on the line on which this accident
occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2792

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

THE WABASH RAILROAD COMPANY

May 16, 1944.

Accident near Gallatin, Mo., on April 11, 1944, caused
by an inferior train occupying the main track on
the time of an opposing superior train.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On April 11, 1944, there was a head-end collision
between a passenger train and a freight train on the
Wabash Railroad near Gallatin, Mo., which resulted in the
injury of four employees.

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

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Moberly Division designated as the 18th District and extending eastward from Stanberry to Brunswick, Mo., 107.5 miles. This was a single-track line over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders, and a manual-block system for following movements only. The accident occurred 42.3 miles east of Stanberry, and, respectively, 1.8 miles and 1.25 miles west of the station and the west siding-switch at Gallatin. From the west there were, in succession, a tangent 936 feet in length, a 1°30' curve to the right 918 feet, a tangent 449 feet and a 2°45' curve to the left 2,030 feet to the point of accident and 1,267 feet beyond. From the east there was a tangent more than 1.5 miles, which was followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade for east-bound trains was, successively, 0.900 percent ascending 500 feet, 0.150 percent ascending 700 feet and 0.163 percent descending 379 feet to the point of accident. The grade for west-bound trains was, successively, 0.386 percent ascending 1,600 feet, 0.040 percent descending 700 feet and 0.163 percent ascending 21 feet to the point of accident.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

5. * * *

The time applies to the switch where an inferior train enters the siding; * * *

* * *

S-72. Trains of the first class are superior to those of the second; * * *

* * *

S-87. An inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains and failing to clear the main track by the time required by rule must be protected as prescribed by Rule 99.

* * *

S-89. At meeting points, the inferior train must take the siding and clear the time of the superior train not less than five minutes, * * *

* * *

FORMS OF
TRAIN ORDERS.

* * *

S-E.

(1) No 1 wait at H until 9 59 a m for No 2.

The train first named must not pass the designated point before the time given, unless the other train has arrived. The train last named is required to run with respect to the time specified, at the designated point or any intermediate station where schedule time is earlier than the time specified in the order, as before required to run with respect to the schedule time of the train first named.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains was 40 miles per hour, and for freight trains, 30 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 11, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 698, one baggage car, one baggage-mail car, one passenger-baggage car, one chair car, one buffet-chair car and one Pullman sleeping car, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. At Brunswick, 63.4 miles east of Gallatin, the crew received copies of train order No. 11, reading as follows:

No 11 Eng 698 wait at Gallatin
until 215 am Jameson until 235 am
for No 92 Eng 2063

No. 11 departed from Brunswick at 12:34 a. m., 18 minutes late, departed from Gallatin at 2:15 a. m., 17 minutes late, and had practically stopped at a point 1.25 miles west of the west siding-switch at Gallatin when it collided with No. 92.

No. 92, an east-bound second-class freight train, consisted of engine 2063, 19 cars and a caboose. At Stanberry the crew received copies of train order No. 11. This train departed from Stanberry, the last open office, at 12:56 a. m., 1 hour 31 minutes late, passed Jameson, 6.7 miles west of Gallatin, about 2:05 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 18 miles per hour it collided with No. 11.

Engines 698 and 2063 stopped upright and in line with the track. The front end of each engine was considerably damaged. The cistern of engine 698 was torn loose from the tender frame. The first car of each train was derailed and considerably damaged. The second car of No. 92 was knocked off center.

From an engine moving in either direction in the vicinity of the point where the accident occurred, the view of a train approaching from the opposite direction was materially restricted, because of an embankment and vegetation on the inside of the curve.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred about 2:18 a. m.

The conductor, the front brakeman and the flagman of No. 92, and the fireman of No. 11 were injured.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 5.8 trains.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that an inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains, and an inferior train must clear the time of opposing superior trains not less than 5 minutes. If an inferior train fails to clear the time of an opposing superior train, flag protection must be provided.

The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 11, which required No. 11, a west-bound train, to wait at Gallatin until 2:15 a. m., and at Jameson, 6.7 miles west of Gallatin, until 2:35 a. m., for No. 92, an east-bound train. No. 92 was inferior by class and was required to be into clear at Gallatin not later than 2:10 a. m. if it proceeded to that station for No. 11. No. 11 departed from the station at Gallatin at 2:15 a. m. and, about 2:18 a. m., when it was 1.25 miles west of the west siding-switch at Gallatin it collided with No. 92.

As No. 11 was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the speed was about 30 miles per hour. The engineer was maintaining a lookout ahead, and the fireman was tending the fire. The first they knew of anything being wrong was when the engine reached a point about 700 feet east of the point where the accident occurred, and the engineer saw the reflection of the headlight of the approaching train. He immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position and called a warning to the fireman. No. 11 had practically stopped at the time of the collision.

The members of the crew of No. 92 had compared time, and there was a variation of only a few seconds in their watches. They understood that their train was inferior to No. 11 and that, at the points designated in train order No. 11, their train was required to clear the times specified not less than 5 minutes. As No. 92 was approaching Jameson the engineer looked at his watch and read the time as 2 a. m. He was confident that sufficient time remained for his train to proceed to Gallatin to clear for No. 11 not later than 2:15 a. m. The front brakeman, who was on the engine, said that he observed the time as 2:05 a. m. when No. 92 was passing the station at Jameson, and he warned the engineer there was not sufficient

time remaining for their train to proceed to Gallatin to clear for No. 11. The engineer said he understood the front brakeman to ask if sufficient time remained to proceed to Gallatin, and he was not aware that he had misread his watch until after the accident occurred. The front brakeman took no further action to prevent the accident. The fireman was tending the fire and he did not observe the time, nor give any attention to the authority for the movement of the train. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. They said their train passed Jameson about 2:07 a. m., and they were aware that there was not sufficient time remaining to proceed to Gallatin to clear for No. 11, but they expected the engineer would take action to stop the train in time to provide flag protection if it became necessary. As No. 92 was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the speed was about 30 miles per hour. The engineer and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead. They saw the reflection of the headlight of the approaching train about 1,400 feet distant, and the engineer immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 92 was about 18 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The carrier's book of operating rules contains manual-block rules which provide for blocking of opposing movements, but these rules were not in effect in the territory involved. If an adequate block system had been in use in this territory, these opposing trains would not have been permitted to occupy the same block simultaneously, and this accident would not have occurred.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by an inferior train occupying the main track on the time of an opposing superior train.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Wabash Railroad Company establish an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this sixteenth day of May, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.