

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2924

THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

AT PHILIPPI, W. VA., ON

AUGUST 17, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: Baltimore and Ohio
Date: August 17, 1945
Location: Philippi, W. Va.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Passenger : Engine
Train numbers: 35 : Extra 2771 East
Engine numbers: 5120 : 2771
Consist: 4 cars :
Estimated speed: 15 m. p. h. : 10 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders, and
manual-block system for trains
following passenger trains
Track: Single; 11° curve; 0.35 percent
descending grade westward
Weather: Clear
Time: 9:53 a. m.
Casualties: 13 injured
Cause: Inferior train occupying main track
on time of opposing superior train
Recommendation: That the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
Company install an adequate block
system on the line on which this
accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2924

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

THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY

September 27, 1945.

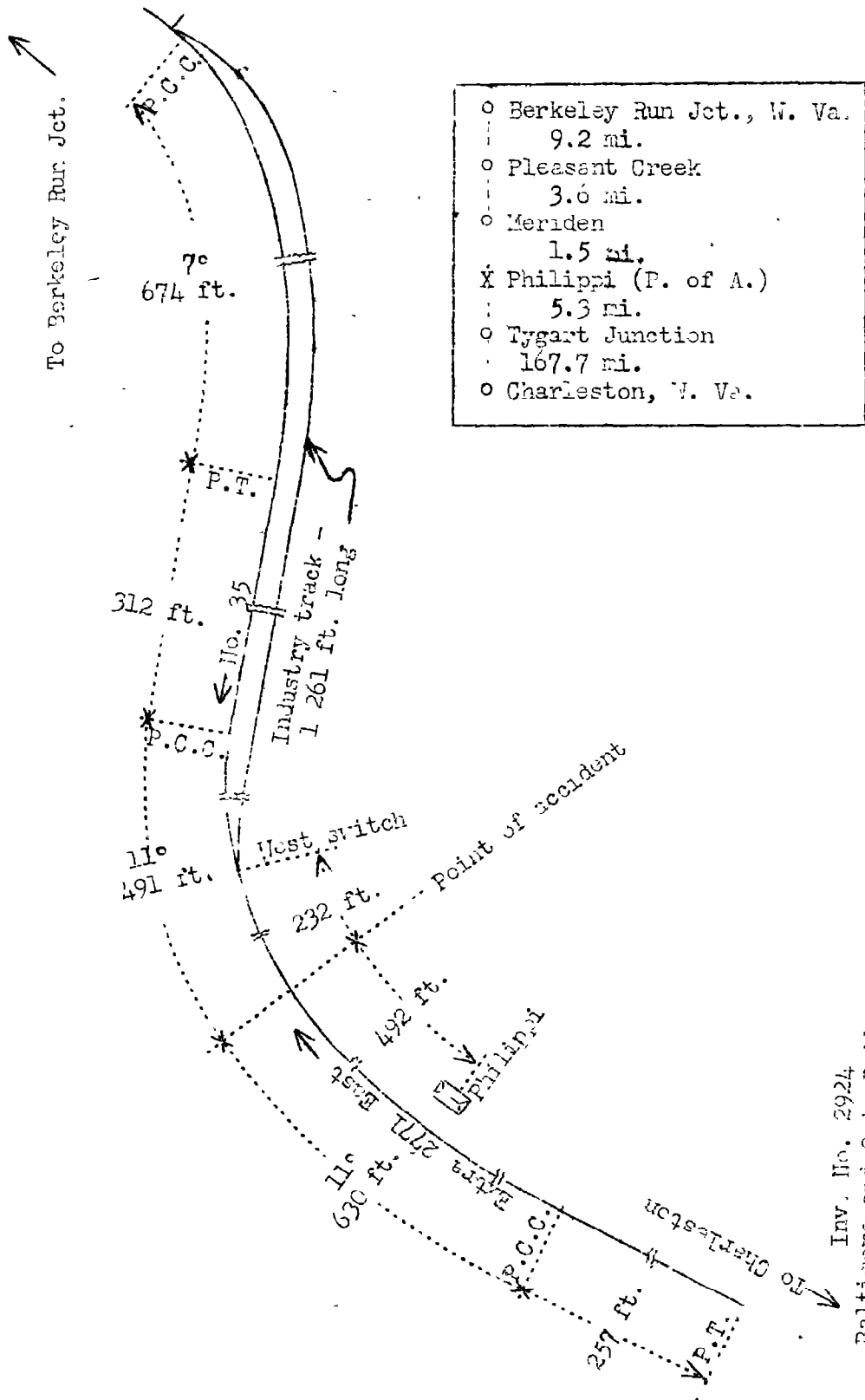
Accident at Philippi, W. Va., on August 17, 1945, caused
by an inferior train occupying the main track on
the time of an opposing superior train.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 17, 1945, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and an engine on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Philippi, W. Va., which resulted in the injury of seven passengers, one railway-mail clerk, four train-service employees on duty and one employee off duty.

¹Under 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.



Inv. No. 2924
 Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
 Philippi, W. Va.
 August 17, 1945

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on the Grafton and Charleston Sub-Division, which extends between Berkeley Run Jct. and Charleston, W. Va., 187.3 miles, a single-track line in the vicinity of the point of accident, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders, and a manual-block system for trains following passenger trains. At Philippi, 14.3 miles west of Berkeley Run Jct., an industry track 1,261 feet in length parallels the main track on the south. The west switch of this track is 724 feet east of the station. The accident occurred on the main track 232 feet west of the west switch of the industry track. From the east there are, in succession, a compound curve to the right 674 feet in length, the maximum curvature of which is 7°, a tangent 312 feet and a compound curve to the left, the maximum curvature of which is 11°, extending 491 feet to the point of accident and 630 feet westward. From the west there is a tangent 257 feet in length, which is followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.35 percent descending westward.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

5. * * *

The time applies at the switch where an inferior train enters the siding; * * * where there is no siding it applies to the place from which fixed signals are operated; * * *

* * *

73. Extra trains are inferior to regular trains.

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.

Extra trains must clear the time of opposing regular trains not less than five minutes * * *

99. When a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals a sufficient distance to insure full protection, placing two torpedoes, and when necessary, in addition, displaying lighted fuses.

* * *

The front of a train must be protected in the same way when necessary by the front trainmen * * *

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for all trains on the curve on which the accident occurred is 20 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 35, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 5120, three baggage-mail cars and one coach, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. This train departed from Pleasant Creek, 5.1 miles east of Philippi and the last open office, at 9:41 a. m., on time, departed from Meriden, 1.5 miles east of Philippi, at 9:48 a. m., on time, and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it collided with Extra 2771 East at a point 232 feet west of the west industry-track switch and 492 feet east of the station at Philippi.

Extra 2771 East, an east-bound engine, departed from Tygart Junction, 5.3 miles west of Philippi, at 9:35 a. m., passed the station at Philippi at 9:53 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it collided with No. 35.

None of the equipment of either train was derailed. The front ends of engines 2771 and 5120 were considerably damaged, and the first, third and fourth cars of No. 35 were slightly damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 9:53 a. m.

The engineer and the brakeman of Extra 2771, and the engineer and the conductor of No. 35 were injured.

During the 31-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 20.8 trains.

Discussion

The rules governing operation on the line involved provide that an inferior train must keep out of the way of opposing superior trains, and extra trains must clear the time of opposing regular trains not less than 5 minutes.

No. 35, a west-bound first-class train, was due to leave Meriden, 1.5 miles east of Philippi, at 9:48 a. m. and Philippi at 9:55 a. m. There is no siding at Philippi, and, under the rules, the schedule time of regular trains at this point applies at the train-order signal located opposite the station. No. 35 departed from Meriden at 9:48 a. m., on time, and about

9:53 a. m. it collided with Extra 2771 East at a point 232 feet west of the west industry-track switch and 492 feet east of the train-order signal at Philippi.

As No. 35 was approaching Philipoi the speed was about 20 miles per hour, the throttle was closed and the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. Because of buildings and vegetation on the inside of the curve, the view had by the enginemen of the track ahead was materially restricted. The first these employees knew of anything being wrong was when they saw the approaching engine about 200 feet distant. Then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 35 was about 15 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The crew of Extra 2771 East consisted of an engineer, a fireman and a brakeman. This train departed from Tygart Junction, 5.3 miles west of Philipoi, at 9:35 a. m. The crew understood that if their train proceeded to the industry track at Philippi for No. 35 it was required to be into clear on the industry track not less than 5 minutes prior to the time No. 35 was due to leave Meriden, and that flag protection was required to be furnished against No. 35 east of the west industry-track switch if their train was not clear of the main track at the required time. The engineer said that as his train was approaching the station at Philippi he looked at his watch and read the time as 9:46 a. m. He was confident that sufficient time remained for his train to enter the industry track at the west switch and to clear for No. 35 not later than 9:48 a. m. Neither the fireman nor the brakeman observed the time, and they did not question the engineer as to the authority of their train to proceed. The engineer had compared his watch with a standard clock about 5 hours prior to the occurrence of the accident, and his watch was 5 seconds fast at that time. After the accident he found that his watch had stopped at 9:47. The first these employees were aware that No. 35 was approaching was when they saw the engine about 200 feet distant. Then the engineer moved the independent brake valve to application position. The speed of Extra 2771 was about 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

The book of operating rules of this carrier contains manual-block rules which, among other things, provide for blocking of opposing trains, but these rules were not in effect in this territory. 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.

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 Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company install an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-seventh day of September, 1945.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.