

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 3158
CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND AND PACIFIC
RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR PULASKI, ARK., ON
JANUARY 15, 1948

SUMMARY

Railroad: Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific
Date: January 15, 1948
Location: Pulaski, Ark.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Trains involved: Passenger : Freight
Train numbers: 111 : 994
Engine numbers: 4014 : 2712
Consists: 7 cars : 62 cars, caboose
Estimated speeds: 20 m. p. h. : 6 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; 4^o22' curve; 0.60 percent
descending grade westward
Weather: Clear
Time: 1:40 a. m.
Casualties: 2 killed; 17 injured
Cause: Failure of superior train to obey
a wait order
Recommendation: That the Chicago, Rock Island and
Pacific Railroad Company establish
an adequate block system on line
on which accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 3158

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

CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND AND PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

February 13, 1948

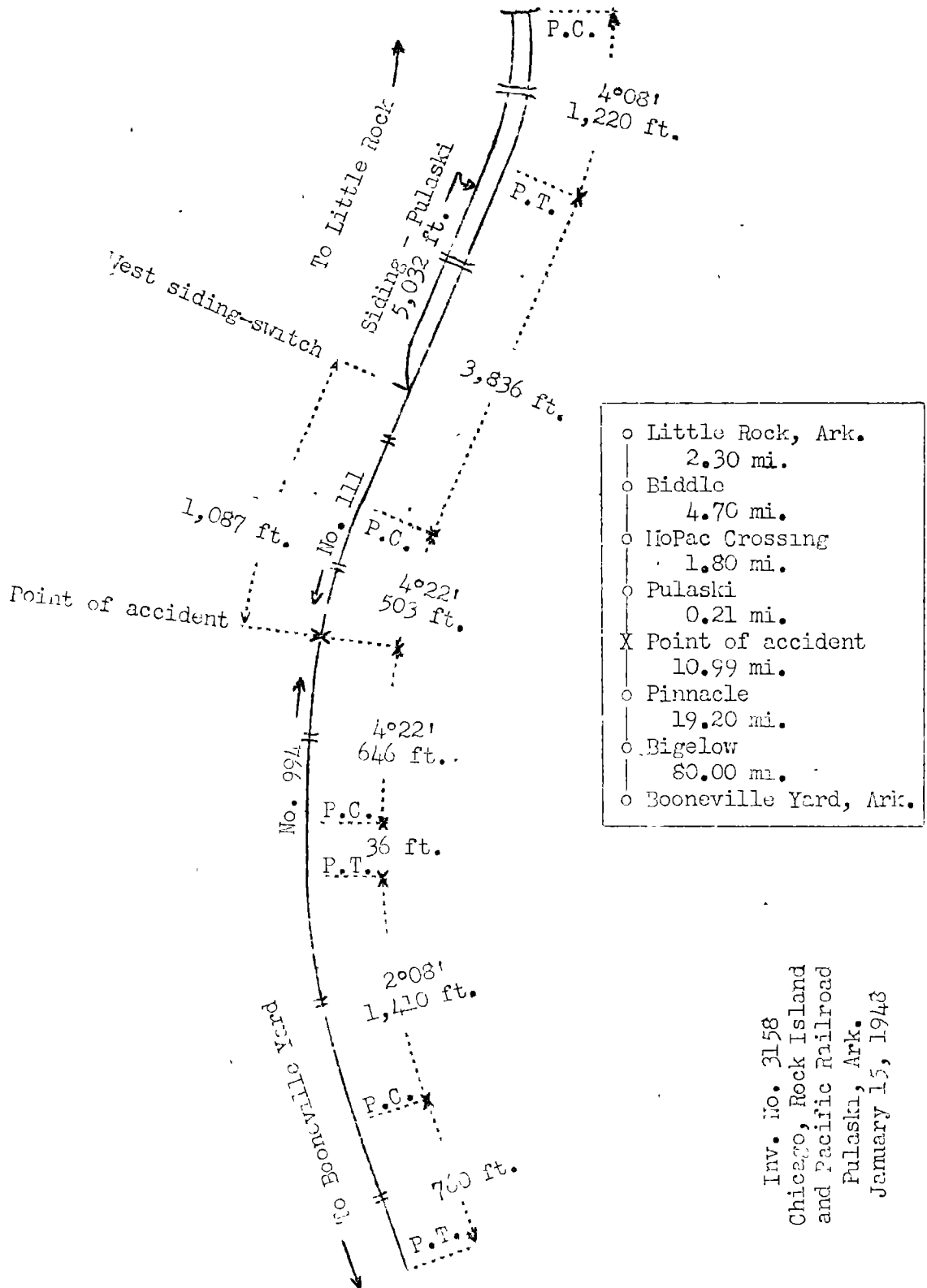
Accident near Pulaski, Ark., on January 15, 1948, caused
by failure of the superior train to obey a wait
order.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On January 15, 1948, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad near Pulaski, Ark., which resulted in the death of one passenger and one train-service employee, and the injury of six passengers, two railway-mail clerks, two Pullman employees, two dining-car employees, and five train-service employees.

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. 3158
 Chicago, Rock Island
 and Pacific Railroad
 Pulaski, Ark.
 January 15, 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Arkansas Division extending between Little Rock and Booneville Yard, Ark., 119.2 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. At Pulaski, 8.8 miles west of Little Rock, a siding 5,032 feet in length parallels the main track on the north. There is no station at Pulaski. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 1,087 feet west of the west siding-switch. From the east there are, in succession, a 4°08' curve to the right 1,220 feet in length, a tangent 3,836 feet and a 4°22' curve to the left 503 feet to the point of accident and 646 feet westward. From the west there are, in succession, a tangent 760 feet in length, a 2°08' curve to the right 1,410 feet, a tangent 36 feet and the curve on which the accident occurred. At the point of accident the grade is 0.60 percent descending westward.

This carrier's operating rules read in part as follows:

5. * * *

The time applies at the switch where an opposing train enters the siding; * * *

* * *

14. Engine Whistle Signals.

NOTE.--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "___" for longer sounds. * * *

Sound. Indication.

* * *

(n) ___ ___ o Approaching meeting or waiting points. See Rule S-90.

* * *

16. Communicating Signals.

NOTE.--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "___" for longer sounds. * * *

Sound. Indication.

* * *

(1) _____ Approaching meeting or waiting points. See Rule S-90.

* * *

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

* * *

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, * * *

The inferior train must pull into the siding when practicable. * * *

S-90. On trains equipped with communicating signal system, the conductor must give signal 16 (1) to the engineman after passing the last station but not less than one mile preceding * * * a point where by train order it is to * * * wait for, an opposing train. The engineman will immediately reply with signal 14 (n). If the engineman fails to answer by signal 14 (n), the conductor must take immediate action to stop the train.

* * *

Should engineman fail to give this signal or fail to prepare to stop short of fouling point, when required, the conductor must take immediate action to stop the train.

204. * * *

* * *

Enginemen and firemen and, when practicable, forward trainman must read train orders, check with each other and have a definite and proper understanding of their requirements. Conductors and, when practicable, trainmen, must read train orders, check with each other and have a definite and proper understanding of their requirements.

204 (a). In addition to copies of all train orders and clearances delivered to each employe addressed, an extra copy will be furnished the engineman, and a copy to rear trainman. * * *

FORMS OF
TRAIN ORDERS.

* * *

S-E.

Time Orders.

(1) No 2 Eng 33 wait at H until 9 59 a m for
No 61 Eng 99.

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.

* * *

In this territory the maximum authorized speeds are 59 miles per hour for passenger trains and 45 miles per hour for freight trains.

Description of Accident

At Biddle, 6.5 miles east of Pulaski, the crew of No. 111, a west-bound first-class passenger train, received copies of train order No. 1, reading in part as follows:

* * *

No 111 Eng 4014 wait at
Pulaski until 150 am for No
994 Eng 2712

No. 111 consisted of engine 4014, one baggage car, one mail car, two coaches, one dining car, and two sleeping cars, in the order named. All cars were of all-steel construction. This train passed Biddle at 1:28 a. m., 8 minutes late, passed MoPac Crossing, the last open office, 1.8 miles east of Pulaski, at 1:36 a. m., passed the west siding-switch at Pulaski, where it was required to wait until 1:50 a. m., unless No. 994 was into clear on the siding, and, about 1:40 a. m., while moving at an estimated speed of 20 miles per hour, it collided with No. 994 at a point 1,087 feet west of the west siding-switch.

At Bigelow, 30.4 miles west of Pulaski, the crew of No. 994, an east-bound second-class freight train, received copies of train order No. 1. This train, consisting of engine 2712, 62 cars and a caboose, passed Bigelow, the last open office, at 12:44 a. m., 2 hours 52 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 6 miles per hour it collided with No. 111.

The engines of both trains, the rear truck of the second car of No. 111 and the first four cars of No. 994 were derailed. The rear end of the second car of No. 111 telescoped the front end of the third car a distance of about 10 feet. The engines and the derailed cars were badly damaged.

The engineer of No. 111 was killed. The fireman, the front brakeman and the baggagemen of No. 111, and the engineer and the firemen of No. 994 were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 1:40 a. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement in this territory was 9.43 trains.

Discussion

The crews of both trains held copies of train order No. 1, which required No. 111, a west-bound first-class passenger train, to wait at Pulaski until 1:50 a. m. for No. 994, an east-bound second-class freight train. Under the rules, the time applied at the west switch of the siding at Pulaski. No. 111 was required to remain clear of the west siding-switch until 1:50 a. m., unless No. 994 was into clear on the siding, and No. 994 was required to be into clear on the siding not later than 1:45 a. m., if it proceeded to Pulaski to meet No. 111. No. 111 passed the west siding-switch and collided with No. 994 about 1:40 a. m., at a point 1,087 feet west of the switch.

As No. 994 was approaching the west siding-switch at Pulaski the headlight was lighted brightly, and the engine-men and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead. When the engine entered the curve on which the accident occurred the speed had been reduced to about 6 miles per hour in preparation for entering the siding. Because of an embankment and vegetation on the inside of the curve the view of the track ahead was materially restricted. The first the employees on the engine knew of anything being wrong was when they saw the reflection of the headlight of the approaching train a few hundred feet distant. Then the engineer moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the collision occurred before the train could be stopped.

As No. 111 was approaching Pulaski the speed was about 40 miles per hour. The headlight was lighted brightly, and the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The conductor was in the fourth car, the front brakeman was in the third car and the flagman was in the rear car. Each member of the crew had compared time, and there was a variation of only a few seconds in their watches. The surviving members of the crew understood that, under the provisions of train order No. 1, their train was required to remain clear of the west siding-switch at Pulaski until 1:50 a. m., unless No. 994 was into clear on the siding. The front brakeman said that after his train passed Fiddle he sounded on the train communication system the waiting-point signal. The conductor and the flagman said that they heard this signal sounded on the train communication system when their train was about 1 mile east of the east siding-switch, and that the signal was acknowledged by the prescribed signal being sounded on the engine whistle. The fireman said he did not hear either of these signals sounded. He said that when the engine was in the vicinity of the east siding-switch he observed that No. 994 was not occupying the siding, and he called the engineer's attention to the provisions of the wait order.

The engineer replied that the order established Pinnacle, 11.2 miles west of Pulaski, as the waiting point. Then the fireman reread the order and again warned the engineer that Pulaski was the waiting point. At that time the engine was a short distance east of the west siding-switch, and the engineer made a service brake-pipe reduction. However, the train passed the switch and was moving at a speed of about 20 miles per hour when the collision occurred. The engineer was killed. The conductor and the front brakeman were not aware that their train had passed the west siding-switch until the collision occurred. The flagman said that he was attempting to operate the emergency brake valve on the rear car when the accident occurred. The brakes of No. 111 had been tested and had functioned properly en route.

In this territory trains are operated by timetable and train orders only. If an adequate block system had been in use, these opposing trains would not have been permitted to occupy the same block simultaneously.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure of the superior train to obey a wait order.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company establish an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this thirteenth day of February, 1948.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.,

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.