

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 1000

THE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

IN THE CITY OF

KANSAS CITY, MO.

JUNE 1, 1936

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3637

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

THE KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY

August 3, 1955

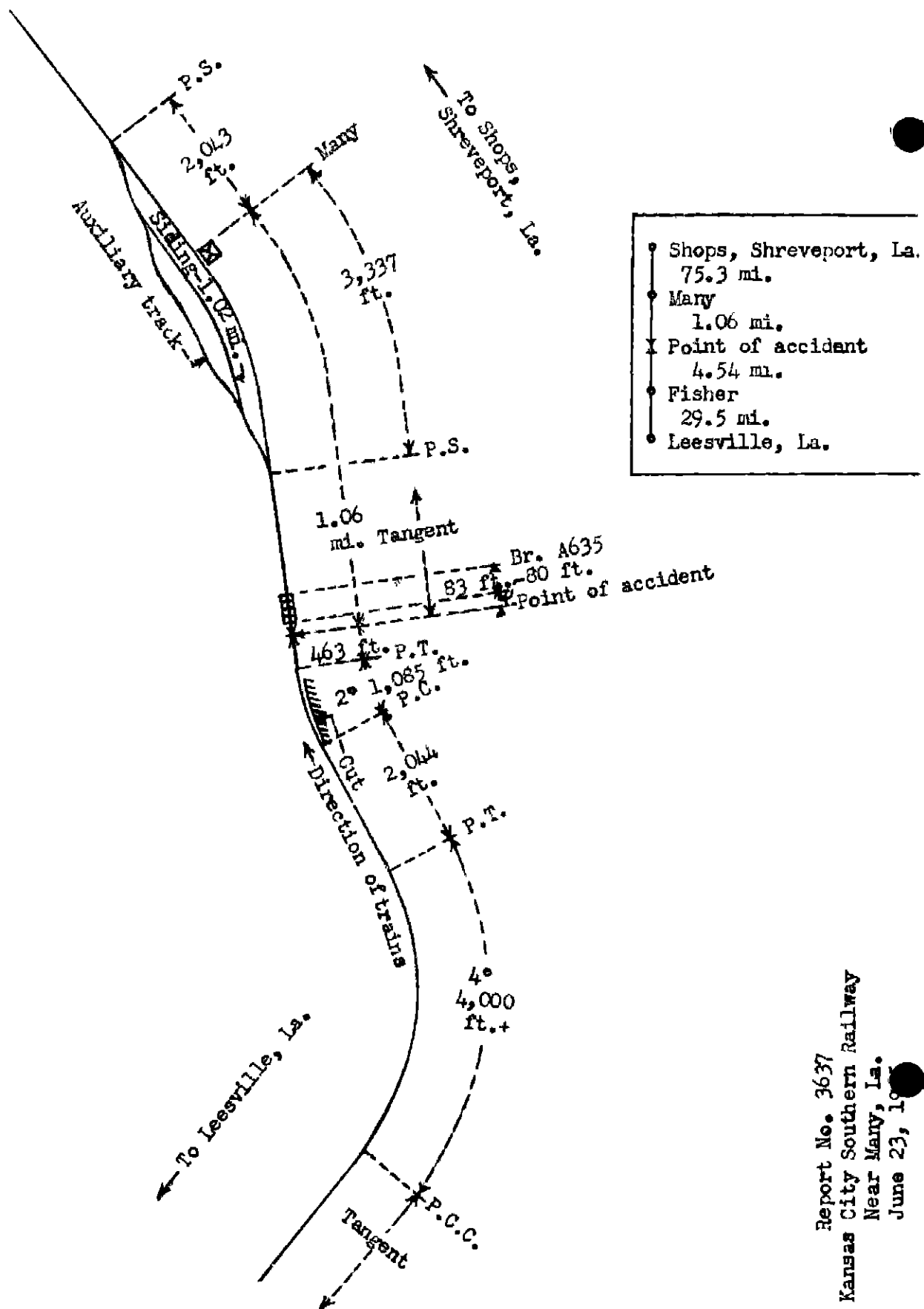
Accident near Many, La., on June 23, 1955, caused by
failure to provide adequate protection for the
preceding train.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

CLARKE, Commissioner:

On June 23, 1955, there was a rear-end collision between two freight trains on the Kansas City Southern Railway near Many, La., which resulted in the injury of three employees.

¹ Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Clarke for consideration and disposition.



Report No. 3637
 Kansas City Southern Railway
 Near Mary, La.
 June 23, 1905

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Southern Division extending between Leesville and Shops, Shreveport, La., 110.4 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 Many, 35.1 miles north of Leesville, a siding 1.02 miles in length parallels the main track on the west. The switches of this siding are located, respectively, 3,337 feet south and 2,043 feet north of the station. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 1.06 miles south of the station at Many. From the south there are, in succession, a compound curve to the left, having a maximum curvature of 4°, more than 4,000 feet in length, a tangent 2,044 feet, a 2° curve to the right 1,085 feet, and a tangent 463 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance northward. Throughout a distance of 2.24 miles immediately south of the point of accident the grade for north-bound trains varies between 0.25 percent and 1.00 percent descending, and it averages 0.80 percent descending. At the point of accident the grade is 0.35 percent descending northward. Between points approximately 1,500 feet and 800 feet south of the point of accident the track is laid in a cut. The east wall of the cut rises to a height of about 9 feet. Vegetation covers this wall of the cut. Several trees are located in the vicinity of the top of the embankment and immediately north of the cut, about 50 feet east of the track and in a line roughly parallel to it.

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

DEFINITIONS.

Restricted Speed.--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, engine, obstruction or switch not properly lined.

11(a). * * *

The explosion of two torpedoes is a signal to immediately reduce speed and proceed for a safe flagging distance at restricted speed.

* * *

14. Engine Horn or Whistle Signals.--* * *

* * *

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

Sound.

Indication.

* * *

(c) — o o o

Flagman go back and protect rear of train.

(d) — — — —

Flagman may return from south or west as prescribed by Rule 99.

* * *

35. Flagging Signals.--The following signals will be used by flagmen:

Day Signals (A red flag,
(Torpedoes and
(Red fuseses.

* * *

99. * * *

When a train stops on a main track 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 red fuseses. When recalled and safety to the train will permit, he may return, and * * * leave the torpedoes and a lighted red fuses.

* * *

99 (a). When rear end protection is required, the engineer will immediately sound Signal 14 (c) * * *. When safety to the train will permit, he will recall the flagman.

* * *

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

Description of Accident

No. 82, a north-bound second-class freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric units 76D, 59B, and 72C, coupled in multiple-unit control, 130 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Leesville at 6:15 a. m., 4 hours 15 minutes late, passed Fisher, 4.54 miles south of the point of accident and the last open office, at 7:23 a. m., 4 hours 3 minutes late, and stopped on the main track about 7:45 a. m., with the rear end 1.06 miles south of the station at Many. About 40 minutes later, after the eighty-third car had been set off on an auxiliary track and the train had been re-coupled, the rear end was struck by Extra 155 North.

Extra 155 North, a north-bound freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric unit 155, 3 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Leesville at 6:40 a. m. Switching service was performed en route, and the train departed from Fisher at 8:17 a. m. At this time the train consisted of the locomotive, 18 cars, and the caboose. While it was moving at a speed of 25 miles per hour it struck the rear end of No. 82.

The caboose and the rear three cars of No. 82 were derailed and stopped in various positions on or near the track. The caboose and the rear two cars were destroyed, and the third rear car was badly damaged. The locomotive and the first car of Extra 155 North were derailed. The locomotive overturned and stopped with the front end approximately 160 feet north of the point of collision. The front end dropped off the west side of a pile trestle which spans a dry creek bed at this point. The front truck of this unit

was displaced. The first car stopped in line with the track. It was off center at both ends. The locomotive was badly damaged, and the first car was slightly damaged.

The engineer, the front brakeman, and the swing brakeman of Extra 155 North were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 8:25 a. m.

The locomotive and the caboose of No. 82 were provided with train communication equipment. There was no equipment of this character on Extra 155 North.

Discussion

As No. 82 was passing Fisher the conductor observed indications of an overheated journal on the forty-eighth car ahead of the caboose. He called the engineer on the train communication system and instructed him to stop the train for inspection at a point where it could be started without difficulty. Soon afterward the train was stopped with the rear end approximately 4 miles south of the south siding-switch at Many. While the flagman was making an inspection of the hot journal the conductor proceeded southward 1,200 to 1,350 feet to provide flag protection. He placed torpedoes on the rail at this point. Several minutes later he received a signal from the flagman indicating that the car could be moved, and he left a lighted red fusee and returned to the caboose. He then communicated with the engineer, instructed him to proceed to Many, and gave him instructions as to the manner in which the car with the overheated journal was to be set off at that point. He estimated that the train was stopped 8 or 10 minutes during this inspection.

The train stopped at Many with the locomotive in the vicinity of the station and the rear end 1.06 miles south of the station. The engineer immediately sounded the whistle signal for the flagman to protect the rear of the train. Because of the length of the train and difficulty in transmitting hand signals, instructions for movements were then

transmitted over the train communication system by the conductor, who could see the signals of the flagman. The flagman had remained on the car on which the overheated journal was found. Direct communication between the caboose and the locomotive had failed several minutes before the train arrived at Many, and it was necessary for the conductor to relay his instructions to the engineer through a wayside train communication station at Leesville, which remained in communication with both ends of the train. The first 82 cars were detached from the rear portion of the train by the flagman and were moved northward between the siding switches. The locomotive was then detached by the front brakeman. It returned through the siding, and the eighty-third car was set off on an adjacent auxiliary track. The front brakeman returned to the front of the train with the locomotive, and the forward portion of the train was then moved southward and coupled to the rear portion. The engineer said that he sounded the whistle signal to recall the flagman after he was certain that the coupling had been made and that the air-brake system of the train was being recharged. He said that several minutes later he received instructions to proceed. Soon afterward, before the train had been started, the rear end was struck by Extra 155 North. The engineer estimated that the accident occurred about 5 to 7 minutes after the flagman had been recalled. The conductor said that he dropped off a lighted red fusee as the train approached Many, and when the train stopped he remained in the caboose. He said that he depended on the lighted 10-minute fusee to provide protection during the 5 or 6 minutes required to transmit instructions for movements necessary to set off the car. He thought the torpedoes placed at the point where the train previously had been stopped for inspection also would provide some protection. After the forward portion of the train had been moved between the siding switches he left the caboose and proceeded southward to provide protection. He placed torpedoes at a point approximately 1,570 feet to the rear of the caboose, and then returned to a point on the curve where the caboose was in view. He said that he was recalled at 8:10 a. m., and he left a lighted fusee at this point. Immediately after he

boarded the caboose he communicated with Leesville and directed the operator to inform the engineer that the train was ready to proceed. The train had not started after a period of 6 or 7 minutes, and he became concerned and again proceeded southward to provide protection. When he heard the approaching train he lighted a fusee and ran southward giving stop signals. He had reached a point approximately 350 feet to the rear of the caboose when the locomotive of Extra 155 North passed him.

As Extra 155 North was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen, the front brakeman, the swing brakeman, and a student brakeman were in the control compartment at the front of the locomotive. All were maintaining a lookout ahead except the swing brakeman, who was seated at a point in the rear of the compartment from which the track ahead was not visible. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. Torpedoes were exploded by the locomotive at a point approximately 1 mile north of Fisher, and the speed was immediately reduced by a service application of the brakes. The engineer said that the train then proceeded at reduced speed a distance of about 1-1/2 miles. As the train approached the point where the accident occurred the speed increased to about 39 miles per hour on the descending grade. The engineer said that when the caboose of the preceding train became visible to him he made an emergency application of the brakes and called a warning. About the same time the locomotive exploded torpedoes, and as it continued to move northward on the curve he saw the conductor of the preceding train giving stop signals with a lighted red fusee from a position about 350 feet to the rear of the caboose. The members of the crew jumped off the locomotive before the collision occurred.

According to the tape of the speed-recording device the speed of Extra 155 North was reduced to 14 miles per hour at a point 3-1/2 miles south of the point of accident, after it increased in a distance of 1 mile to a maximum of which

39 miles per hour. Throughout a distance of 3 miles immediately south of the point of accident the speed varied between 30 and 39 miles per hour. The tape indicates that the emergency application of the brakes reduced the speed from 39 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour at the point of collision.

Tests made after the accident occurred disclosed that because of track curvature, the east wall of the cut, and a tree on the embankment east of the track, the view of the track ahead from the engineer's position in the control compartment of a locomotive approaching the point of accident from the south is materially restricted. A portion of the superstructure of a caboose placed at the point of accident first became visible from the control compartment of a north-bound locomotive at a distance of 1,326 feet.

The rules of this carrier provide that when a train stops under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train the flagman must go back immediately a sufficient distance to insure full protection. In the instant case protection as required by rule was not provided during the time the conductor was issuing instructions for movements after the train stopped at Many. The distance from which flagging signals afterward were given was not sufficient to provide full protection.

Cause

This accident was caused by failure to provide adequate protection for the preceding train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this third day of August, 1955.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,
Secretary.