

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2717
THE CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC
RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
AT WARDEN, WASH., ON
AUGUST 4, 1945

SUMMARY

Railroad: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul
and Pacific

Date: August 4, 1943

Location: Warden, Wash.

Kind of accident: Side collision

Trains involved: Mixed : Passenger

Train numbers: Extra 849 West : Passenger Extra
251 West

Engine numbers: 849 : 251

Consist: 15 cars : 20 cars

Speed: 2 m. p. h. : 48 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable, train orders and
automatic block-signal system

Track: Single; 1°10' left curve;
practically level

Weather: Clear

Time: 12:52 a. m.

Casualties: 10 killed; 11 injured

Cause: Train fouling main track imme-
diately in front of following train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2717

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

THE CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC
RAILROAD COMPANY

September 7, 1943.

Accident at Warden, Wash., on August 4, 1943, caused by
a train fouling the main track immediately in front
of a following train.

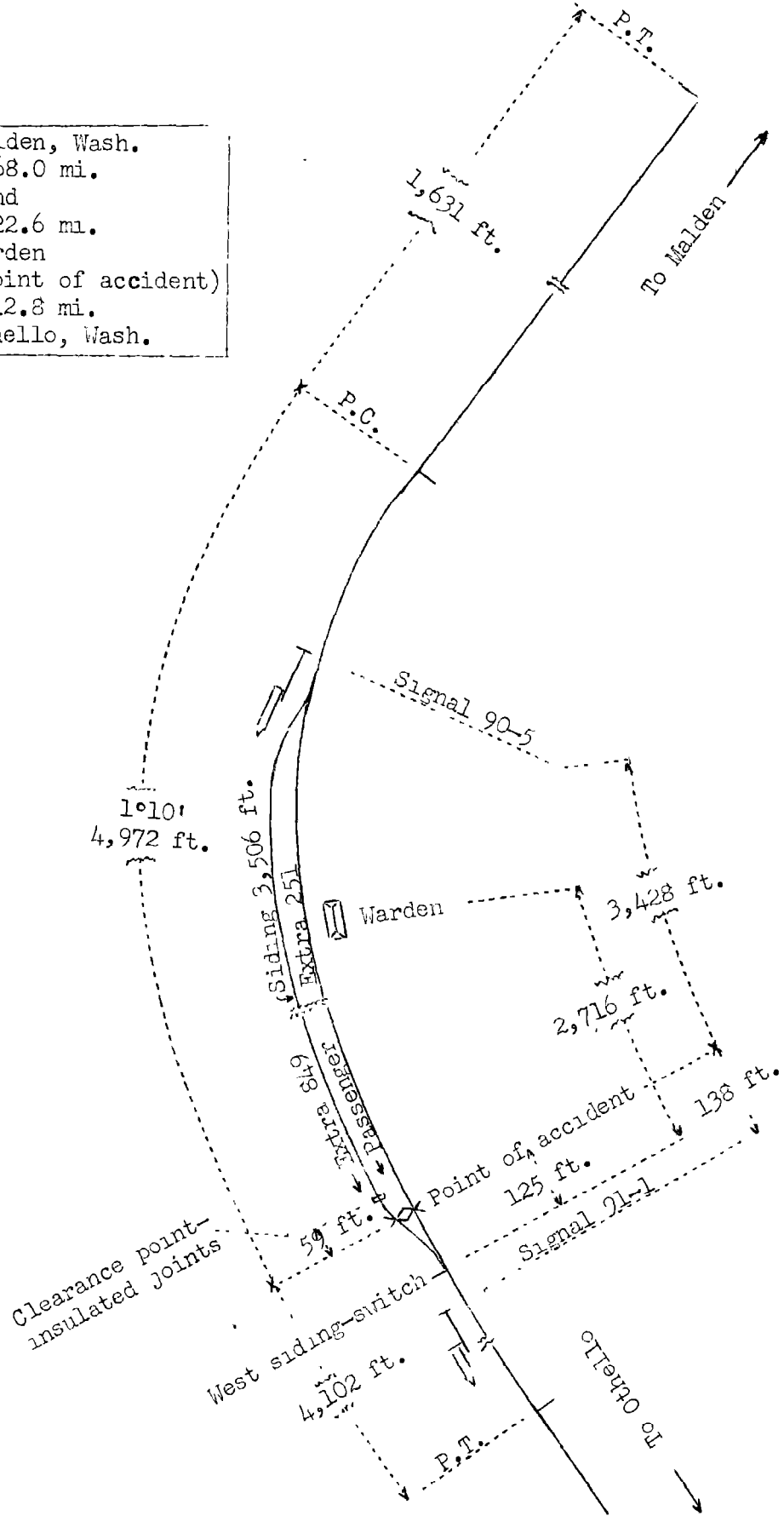
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 4, 1943, there was a side collision between
a mixed train and a passenger train on the Chicago, Mil-
waukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad at Warden, Wash.,
which resulted in the death of 10 passengers, and the injury
of 10 passengers and 1 railway official. This accident was
investigated in conjunction with a representative of the
Washington Department of Public Service.

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

- o Malden, Wash. 68.0 mi.
- o Lind 22.6 mi.
- X Warden (Point of accident) 12.8 mi.
- o Othello, Wash.



Inv-2717
 Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad
 Warden, Wash.
 August 4, 1943

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Coast Division designated as the Third Subdivision and extending between Malden and Othello, Wash., 103.4 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a single-track line over which trains were operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. At Warden a siding 3,506 feet in length paralleled the main track on the north. The west switch of this siding was 2,716 feet west of the station. The clearance point at the west end of the siding was 184 feet east of the switch. The accident occurred 59 feet west of the clearance point and 125 feet east of the west siding-switch. From the east the main track was tangent 1,631 feet, then there was a 1°10' curve to the left 4,972 feet to the point of accident and 4,102 feet beyond. At the point of accident the grade was practically level.

Automatic signals 90-5 and 91-1, which governed west-bound movements, were located, respectively, 3,428 feet east and 138 feet west of the point of accident. These signals were of the one-arm, two-position, upper-quadrant, semaphore type, and were approach-lighted.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

513. Unless otherwise provided, before a train or engine enters on or fouls a main track * * * trainmen will operate the switch and wait two minutes at the switch before making engine or train movement; * * *. This will not relieve employes from the duty of promptly and properly protecting the movement.

514 (A). * * *

Trains or engines proceeding from sidings * * * to the main track, must remain clear of the insulated joints at the clearance point on such tracks until the main track switch has been opened.

The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains was 60 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 849 West, a west-bound mixed train, consisting of engine 849, 13 freight cars, one baggage-express car and one coach, stopped on the siding in the vicinity of the station at Warden about 12:35 a. m. About 12:52 a. m., after this train had moved westward on the siding and stopped with the engine fouling the main track about 125 feet east of the west siding-switch, an attempt was being made to back into clear when the engine was struck by Passenger Extra 251 West.

Passenger Extra 251 West, a west-bound passenger train, consisted of engine 251, 1 baggage car and 19 Pullman sleeping cars, in the order named. All cars were of standard all-steel construction. This train passed Lind, 22.6 miles east of Warden and the last open office east of Warden, at 12:12 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, passed signal 90-5, which displayed proceed, and while moving at a speed of 48 miles per hour, as indicated by the tape of the speed recorder with which engine 251 was equipped, it collided with Extra 849.

Engine 849 and its tender were derailed and badly damaged. The engine stopped on its right side north of the siding. The tender stopped upright behind the engine. The first car of Extra 849 was slightly damaged. Engine 251 and its tender were derailed, badly damaged, and stopped about 250 feet west of the point of accident, on their left sides and south of the main track. The first two cars of Extra 251 were derailed, slightly damaged, and stopped practically upright and in line with the track. The front truck of the third car was derailed. The rear end of the eleventh car telescoped the front portion of the twelfth car a distance of about 37 feet. The rear truck of the eleventh car was driven forward 35 feet and the rear end of the car was badly damaged. The front portion of the twelfth car was demolished.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 12:52 a. m.

Discussion

The rules governing operation in automatic block-signal territory on this line provide that a train or an engine proceeding from a siding to the main track must remain clear of the insulated joints at the clearance point until the switch has been opened. In addition, an interval of 2 minutes must elapse after the switch has been opened before a movement to the main track may be made. The employees involved understood these requirements.

Extra 849 West stopped into clear on the siding at Warden about 12:35 a. m. About 17 minutes later, after this train had moved westward on the siding and stopped, the engine fouled the main track on the turnout of the west switch. While this train was moving in backward motion in an attempt to clear the main track the engine was struck by Passenger Extra 251 West. No train order restricting the authority of either train to proceed had been issued. Under the rules, Extra 849 was required not to pass the clearance point of the west siding-switch until after the switch had been in open position an interval of 2 minutes.

As Passenger Extra 251 was approaching Warden, the speed was about 55 miles per hour. The enginemen and a traveling

engineer were maintaining a lookout ahead from the engine cab. The last automatic signal this train passed displayed proceed. The first warning the crew had of anything being wrong was when their engine reached a point about 1,000 feet east of the west siding-switch and they saw stop signals being given from a point about 130 feet distant. The engineer immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position but he could not stop his train short of engine 849.

The conductor of Extra 849 said he received information from the operator at Warden about 12:45 a. m. that Passenger Extra 251 would pass Warden about 12:50 a. m. He said he expected his train to move westward on the siding but to remain into clear until Passenger Extra 251 passed, and he instructed his crew accordingly. The conductor and the flagman were on the rear car, and the front brakeman and the engine men were on the engine. The employees on the engine said they misunderstood the instructions of the conductor and they thought their train was to proceed ahead of Passenger Extra 251. Extra 849 proceeded westward on the siding and when the engine reached a point a short distance east of the west siding-switch, the front brakeman got off the engine and ran toward the switch to line it for movement to the main track. Soon afterward the fireman saw the approaching train and called a warning to the engineer, who immediately reversed the movement in an unsuccessful attempt to back the train into clear. The flagman said he gave signals for Passenger Extra 251 to stop when he became aware that his train had fouled the main track, but this action was not taken in time to prevent the accident.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a train fouling the main track immediately in front of a following train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this seventh day of September, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.