

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2756  
THE CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR GOREVILLE, ILL., ON  
JANUARY 1, 1944

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Chicago & Eastern Illinois  
Date: January 1, 1944  
Location: Goreville, Ill.  
Kind of accident: Head-end collision  
Trains involved: Freight : Freight  
Train numbers: Extra 2001 North : Extra 1917 South  
Engine numbers: 941, 2001 : 1917  
Consist: 61 cars, caboose : 67 cars, caboose  
Speed: 5 m. p. h. : 15 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable and train orders  
Track: Single; tangent; 0.87 percent  
descending grade southward  
Weather: Clear  
Time: 2:30 a. m.  
Casualties: 2 killed; 1 injured  
Cause: Failure to deliver meet order  
Recommendation: That the Chicago & Eastern Illinois  
Railroad Company establish an ade-  
quate block system on the line on  
which this accident occurred

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2756

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

THE CHICAGO & EASTERN ILLINOIS RAILROAD COMPANY

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February 3, 1944.

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Accident near Goreville, Ill., on January 1, 1944, caused  
by failure to deliver a meet order.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

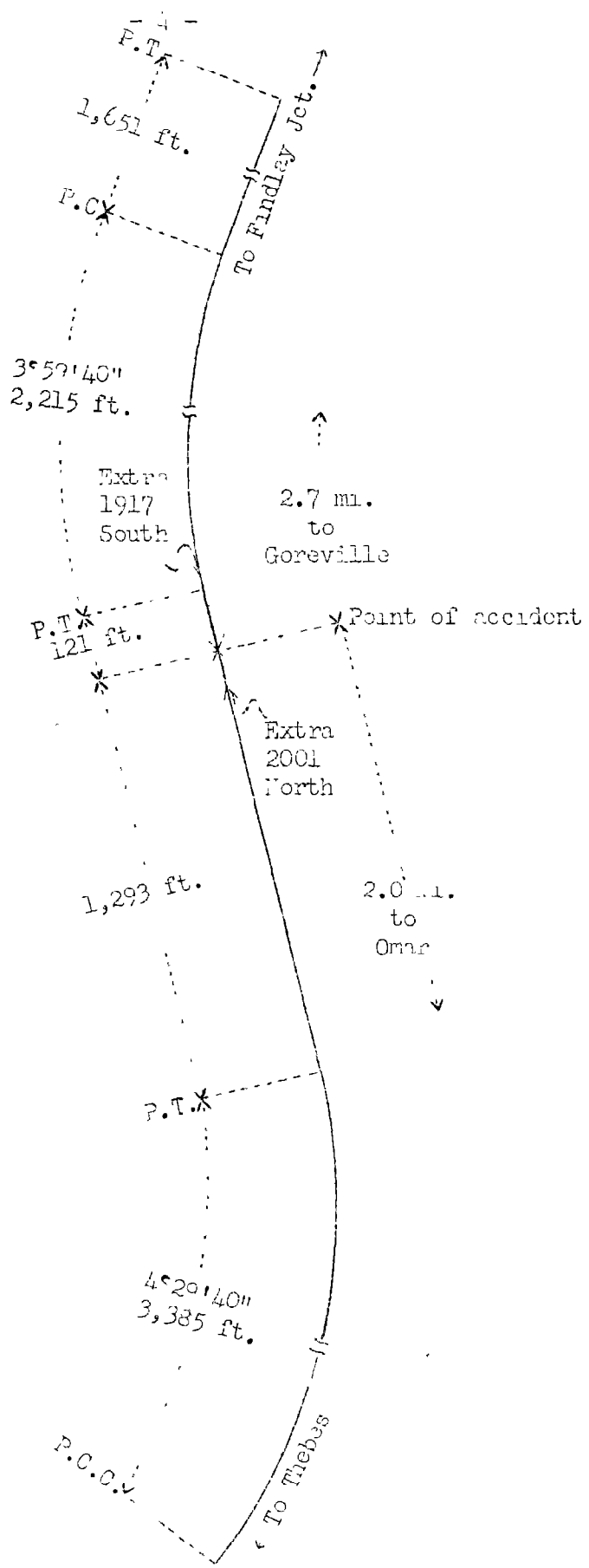
PATTERSON, Chairman:

On January 1, 1944, there was a head-end collision between two freight trains on the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad near Goreville, Ill., which resulted in the death of two employees and the injury of one employee.

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<sup>1</sup>Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and disposition.

- o Findlay Jct., Ill. 66.6 mi.
- o Salem Yard 52.9 mi.
- o West Frankfort 11.6 mi.
- o Marion 12.7 mi.
- o Goreville 2.7 mi.
- x Point of accident 2.0 mi.
- o Omar 11.3 mi.
- o Cypress 32.7 mi.
- o Thebes, Ill.



Inv. No. 2756  
 Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad  
 Goreville, Ill.  
 January 1, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the railroad designated as the Salem District and extending between Findlay Jct. and Thebes, Ill., 192.5 miles. This was a single-track line over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. The accident occurred 2.7 miles south of Goreville and 2.0 miles north of Omar. From the north there were, in succession, a tangent 1,651 feet, a 3°59'40" curve to the left 2,215 feet and a tangent 121 feet to the point of accident. From the south there was a compound curve to the left 3,385 feet having a maximum curvature of 4°29'40", which was followed by a tangent 1,293 feet to this point. Throughout a distance of 1.3 miles immediately north of this point and a considerable distance southward the grade for south-bound trains varied between 0.45 and 0.98 percent descending.

The train-order signal at Goreville was of the three-indication, semaphore type, and was electrically lighted. It was mounted on a mast in front of the station. The night aspects and corresponding indications were as follows:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>
Green	Proceed.
Yellow	Proceed with caution.
Red	Stop.

DEFINITIONS

\* \* \*

Fixed Signal--A signal of fixed location indicating a condition affecting the movement of a train or engine.

\* \* \*

Operating rules read in part as follows:

207. To transmit a train order, the signal "31" or the signal "19" followed by the direction must be given to each office addressed, the number of copies being stated, if more or less than three, thus: "31 north, copy 5," or "19 south, copy 7."

208a. A train order must not be sent to a superior train or to a train that is to be restricted at the meeting point if it can be avoided. When an order is so sent, the fact will be stated in the order and special precautions must be taken to insure safety. When the weather or other conditions

are such that the signal is obscured from view, the operator will place one torpedo on the rail in each direction a sufficient distance from the signal to enable train to stop, and at night or during fog or storm, in addition to the torpedoes, will display a burning fusee.

208b. Clearance card blank A will be issued to the conductor and enginemen of each train receiving train orders \* \* \*; this form must be carefully filled out to show the numbers of all train orders form "31" or "19" \* \* \* for delivery to the train addressed, operator to preserve and file the lowest copy. \* \* \* If there are any orders form "31" the train dispatcher must check all orders by numbers before authorizing delivery. \* \* \*

210. When a "31" train order has been transmitted, operators must, unless otherwise directed, repeat it at once from the manifold copy in the succession in which the several offices have been addressed, and then write the time of repetition on the order. \* \* \*

\* \* \* those to whom the order is addressed, except enginemen, will then sign it, and the operator will send their signature preceded by the number of the order to the train dispatcher. The response "complete" and the time, with the initials of the train dispatcher will then be given by the train dispatcher. Each operator receiving this response will then write on each copy the word "complete," the time, and his last name in full, and then deliver a copy to each person addressed, except enginemen, which they will compare while the operator reads the order aloud. The copy for each engineman must be delivered to him personally by the conductor, and the engineman will read it aloud to him and understand it before acting thereon.

210a. A "31" order may be delivered by the operator to the engineman on a freight train. In this case the engineman instead of the conductor will sign the order and the operator will deliver conductor's copy to rear of train.

220. Train orders once in effect continue so until fulfilled, superseded, annulled, \* \* \*. A train order that is not to be delivered must not be "filed" but must be annulled by the train dispatcher, \* \* \*

\* \* \*

221. Where a fixed signal is used at a train order office it shall indicate stop at all times when there is an operator on duty, except:

- (a) When changed to proceed to allow a train to pass; there being no train orders \* \* \* for any train in that direction.

\* \* \*

When the fixed signal is used as a train order signal only, the caution or diagonal position indicates "19" orders, and the "stop" or horizontal position indicates "31" orders \* \* \*

\* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for the north-bound train was 35 miles per hour, and for the south-bound train, 40 miles per hour.

#### Description of Accident

At Thebes, 48.7 miles south of Goreville, the crew of Extra 2001 North, a north-bound freight train, received copies of train order No. 222, Form 19, reading in part as follows:

Engine 2001 run extra Thebes to Salem  
Yard meet \* \* \* Extra 1917 South at Omar. \* \* \*

At Cypress, 16 miles south of Goreville and the last open office south of Goreville, the crew received copies of train order No. 106, Form 19, reading in part as follows:

Extra 2001 North meet No 185 \* \* \* at Omar  
and meet Extra 1917 South at Goreville instead  
of Omar. \* \* \* Extra 2001 take siding at Goreville.  
Extra 1917 South gets this at Goreville. \* \* \*

Extra 2001 North, consisting of engines 941 and 2001, 61 cars and a caboose, in the order named, departed from Cypress at 1:45 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 5 miles per hour it collided with Extra 1917 South 2.7 miles south of Goreville.

At West Frankfort, 24.3 miles north of Goreville and the last open office north of Goreville, the crew of Extra 1917 South, a south-bound freight train, received copies of train order No. 222, Form 31. This train, consisting of engine 1917, 67 cars and a caboose, passed Goreville, where the crew should have received copies of train order No. 106 requiring their train to meet Extra 2001 South at Goreville, at 2:27 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it

collided with Extra 2001 North.

Engine 941 was derailed and practically demolished. The first, second, fifth, sixth and seventh cars of Extra 2001 were derailed and considerably damaged. Engine 1917 was derailed and slightly damaged. The fifth, sixth and seventh cars of Extra 1917 were derailed and slightly damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 2:30 a. m.

A conductor deadheading on engine 941 and the fireman of engine 941 were killed. The fireman of Extra 1917 South was 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 28.58 trains.

#### Discussion

The rules governing operation on this line provide that train orders must not be sent to a train which is to be restricted at the meeting or waiting point, if it can be avoided. When an order is so sent, the fact must be stated in the order and special precautions taken to insure safety. The fixed signal at a train-order office must display stop for all trains when the operator is on duty, except when changed to display proceed to permit a train to pass, provided no train order has been sent for delivery to any train moving in the same direction, or when the signal is displayed to indicate caution for the delivery of form 19 train orders. When a form 31 train order has been received for delivery to a freight train, the operator must procure the signature of the conductor or the engineer, and send the number of the order and the signature to the train dispatcher. The response "complete" and the time, with the initials of the dispatcher, will then be given by the dispatcher. The operator will then write the word "complete," the time and his last name in full on the order, and then deliver a clearance form and copies of the order to the engineer and the conductor. Train orders remain in effect until fulfilled, superseded or annulled. In the territory where this accident occurred, the telegraph is used for the dispatching of trains.

The crew of each train held copies of train orders authorizing the movement of Extra 2001 North from Thebes to Salem Yard and Extra 1917 South from Salem Yard to Thebes and establishing Omar as the meeting point for these trains. Later, train order No. 106 changing the meeting point for these trains to Goreville instead of Omar was issued. The crew of Extra 2001 North received copies of order No. 106 at Cypress. The order was sent to the operator at Goreville for delivery to Extra 1917 South, but it was not delivered to the crew of that train when it passed that station. This resulted in a lap of authority of the trains involved, as the crew of Extra 2001



North held an order authorizing its train to proceed to Goreville to meet Extra 1917 South at that station, and the crew of the latter train held an order authorizing its train to proceed to Omar, about 5 miles south of Goreville, to meet Extra 2001 North. These trains collided about 3 miles south of Goreville. Because of vegetation adjacent to the track and track curvature in this vicinity, the members of the crew on the engine of each train were unable to see the other train more than a few hundred feet. Action to stop their respective trains was taken by the engineers, but the distance was not sufficient to avert the collision.

In addition to changing the meeting point between Extra 2001 North and Extra 1917 South from Omar to Goreville, train order No. 106 established Omar as the meeting point between No. 185, a south-bound third-class train, and Extra 2001 North. The order was addressed to No. 185, Extra 1917 South and the operator at Goreville on form 31, and it included the instruction that Extra 1917 would receive the order at Goreville. The operator at Goreville copied the order when it was being sent by the dispatcher and repeated it correctly, but he made only three instead of five copies of the order. The dispatcher said that he instructed the operator to make five copies. The operator said that he did not hear the instruction. No. 185 had stopped at Goreville and the crew was waiting for delivery of the order while the operator was copying it. When the order was completed the operator delivered two copies to the crew of No. 185, then placed the third copy on a hook underneath his desk. Soon afterward the dispatcher sent another train order to the operator at Goreville for delivery to a north-bound train and, while this order was being sent, the operator heard a south-bound train approaching. He informed the dispatcher that the train was approaching, but the dispatcher did not call his attention to order No. 106. The operator had no orders addressed to any other south-bound train, and he changed the indication of the train-order signal to display proceed. He reported the time the train passed to the dispatcher, then the dispatcher informed him that order No. 106 should have been delivered to the crew of that train. The dispatcher said that Extra 1917 South had passed the last open office north of Goreville before he was informed that Extra 2001 North was ready to depart from Cypress and, to avoid delay to Extra 2001 North, it was necessary for him to send order No. 106 to Goreville for delivery to Extra 1917. He had previously been informed by the chief dispatcher that the operator at Goreville was a new and inexperienced employee but, because this operator had copied and delivered several train orders prior to the time order No. 106 was sent, without making errors, he did not think it was necessary to take precautionary action to insure the delivery of order No. 106. The operator said that he could receive messages by telegraph without difficulty but, because of his inexperience, he was nervous when copying train orders. It was necessary for him to read train orders, after he had copied and repeated them, to enable him to understand the

provisions of the orders. After he delivered copies of order No. 106 to the crew of No. 185, he was engaged in performing other duties and did not read the order until after Extra 1917 had passed.

The investigation disclosed that the train rules examiner had examined this operator during February, 1943, at which time the operator was 16 years 9 months of age. Because he was not sufficiently conversant with the rules to permit him to perform service involving the handling of train orders, the rules examiner disqualified him. Prior to the night of the accident, the only railroad service he had performed was as agent from December 13 to 25, 1943, at a non-train-order office on this line. Because of shortage of operators, the chief dispatcher had instructed this employee to perform service as operator at Goreville beginning December 26, although the employee had not been qualified by the rules examiner and had not previously performed service involving the handling of train orders.

The book of operating rules of this carrier 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 the accident would not have occurred.

#### Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to deliver a meet order.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad Company establish an adequate block system on the line on which this accident occurred.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this third day of February, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.