

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2828

THE TERMINAL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION OF ST. LOUIS

REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT

AT VALLEY JUNCTION, ILL., ON

SEPTEMBER 18, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Terminal Railroad Association
of St. Louis

Date: September 18, 1944

Location: Valley Junction, Ill.

Kind of accident: Derailment

Train involved: M. P. freight

Train number: Extra 1708 South

Engine number: 1703

Consist: 38 cars, caboose

Estimated speed: 10 m. p. h.

Operation: Interlocking

Track: Double; 8° curve; level

Weather: Cloudy

Time: 5:20 a. m.

Casualties: 1 killed

Cause: Failure of the Missouri Pacific
Railroad Company to provide
qualified employees to operate
its train on the line of the
Terminal Railroad Association
of St. Louis

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2828

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

THE TERMINAL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION OF ST. LOUIS

October 16, 1944.

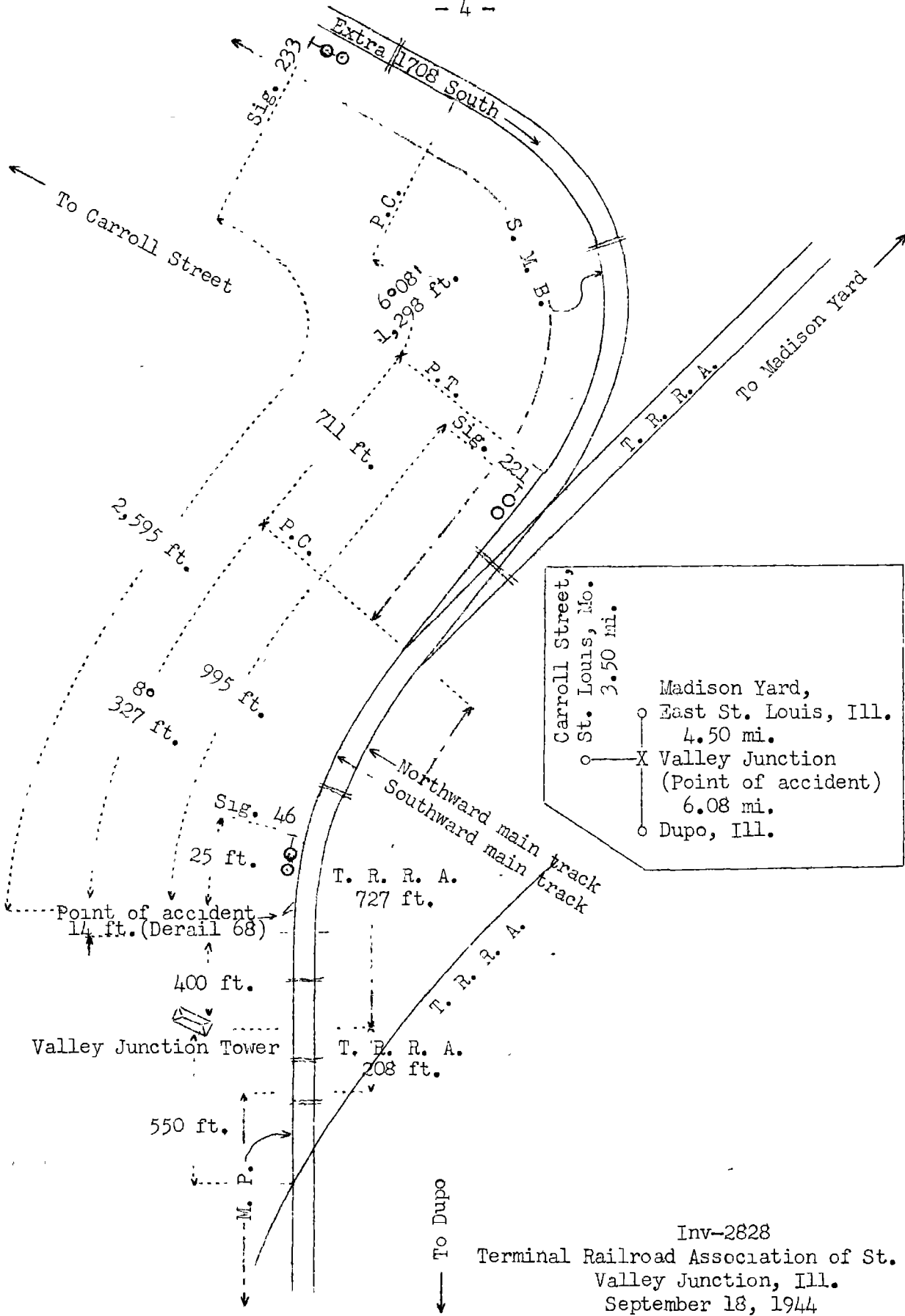
Accident at Valley Junction, Ill., on September 18, 1944,
caused by failure of the Missouri Pacific Railroad
Company to provide qualified employees to operate
its train on the line of the Terminal Railroad
Association of St. Louis.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Chairman:

On September 18, 1944, there was a derailment of a Missouri Pacific Railroad freight train on the line of the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis at Valley Junction, Ill., which resulted in the death of one employee.

¹Under 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.



Inv-2828
 Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis
 Valley Junction, Ill.
 September 18, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

At Valley Junction, Ill., a double-track line of the St. Louis Municipal Bridge Railway System, hereinafter referred to as the S. M. B., extending southward from Carroll Street, St. Louis, Mo., to a point 727 feet north of the tower at Valley Junction, about 3.5 miles, converged with a double-track line of the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, hereinafter referred to as the T. R. R. A., extending southward from Madison Yard, East St. Louis, Ill., to a point 208 feet south of the tower at Valley Junction, about 4.5 miles. A double-track line of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, hereinafter referred to as the M. P., converged with the southern end of the T. R. R. A. line at Valley Junction and extended southward to Dupo, Ill., 6.08 miles. Trains of the M. P. en route from Carroll Street, St. Louis, to Dupo moved, in succession, over the line of the S. M. B. from Carroll Street to the T. R. R. A. connection at Valley Junction, over the line of the T. R. R. A. to the M. P. connection, and over the M. P. to Dupo. Trains moving via this route were operated by signal indications. The accident occurred within interlocking limits at Valley Junction on the southward main track of the T. R. R. A. at a split switch-point derail, designated as derail 68, located on the west rail at a point about 400 feet north of the tower. From the north there were, in succession, a 6°03' curve to the right 1,298 feet in length, a tangent 711 feet and an 8° curve to the left 327 feet to the point of accident and 14 feet southward. The grade for south-bound trains was 1.44 percent descending 1,860 feet, then it was level 340 feet to the point of accident and some distance southward.

A line of the T. R. R. A. crossed the tracks of the M. P. at grade at a point 550 feet south of the tower at Valley Junction. The crossing was protected by interlocking signals.

Interlocking signals 233, 221 and 46, governing south-bound movements on the southward main track, were located, respectively, 2,595 feet, 995 feet and 25 feet north of derail 68. These signals were of the semi-automatic, two-unit, searchlight type, and were continuously lighted. The involved aspects and corresponding indications and names of these signals were as follows:

	<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Indication</u>	<u>Name</u>
Signals 233 and 221	Yellow-over-red	Proceed at restricted speed and prepare to stop at next signal.	Proceed at restricted speed.
Signal 46	Red-over-red	Stop.	Stop.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

Restricted speed definition--Proceed prepared to stop short of train, obstruction, or anything that may require the speed of a train or engine to be reduced.

* * *

34. The engineman and fireman must, when practicable, communicate to each other by its name the indication of all signals affecting the movement of their train. * * *

662. Trains or engines must move quite up to but not pass a signal indicating stop, except as provided in Rule 663.

663. Trains or engines must not proceed on hand signals as against interlocking signals until enginemen and trainmen are fully informed of the situation, and all safety precautions have been taken.

General rules and instructions of the T. R. R. A. read in part as follows:

301.--Trainmen (including enginemen and firemen) of other companies operating on the railways of these companies must have passed the required examinations, hold certificates of competency not older than two years * * * or request pilots * * *. Officers of other companies responsible for handling train and engine crews will know such crews have been properly qualified before assigning them to operate over the rails of these companies.

* * *

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains was 25 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Extra 1708 South, a south-bound M. P. freight train, consisting of engine 1708, 38 cars and a caboose, departed from Carroll Street at 4:58 a. m., passed signals 233 and 221, which displayed proceed-at-restricted-speed, passed signal 46, which displayed stop, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour the engine and the first three cars were derailed at derail 68.

The engine stopped on its right side west of the main tracks and parallel to them, with the front end of the engine 125 feet south of derail 68, and was considerably damaged. The first three cars were slightly damaged.

It was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred at 5:20 a. m.

The conductor was killed.

Discussion

Under the rules governing operation by signal indication in the territory involved, a proceed-at-restricted-speed indication requires that the speed of a train must be controlled so that it can be stopped short of the next signal. An interlocking signal displaying stop must not be passed by a train until the members of the crew are fully informed of the situation and proper precautions have been taken. Enginemen must, when practicable, observe signals and communicate their indications to each other. All the surviving employees concerned understood these requirements.

About 5:10 a. m., the operator-leverman at Valley Junction set derail 68 in derailing position and lined the route for a train moving on the T. R. R. A. line south of the tower to cross the M. P. tracks. Signals 233 and 221 displayed proceed-at-restricted-speed and signal 46 displayed stop for Extra 1708 South. About 10 minutes later Extra 1708 passed signal 46 and the engine and the first three cars were derailed at derail 68.

As Extra 1708 was approaching Valley Junction the speed was about 10 miles per hour. The brakes had functioned properly at all points where used en route. The headlight was lighted brightly. There was no condition of the engine that distracted the attention of the enginemen or obscured visibility ahead. The conductor was on the cistern of the tender, and this employee and the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The front brakeman was in a booth on the engine tender, and the flagman was in the caboose. The indications displayed by signals 233 and 221 required Extra 1708 to be operated in such manner that it could be stopped short of signal 46, and the enginemen called the indications. When the engine reached a point about 300 feet north of signal 46 the conductor and the fireman observed the stop indication displayed by this signal, and they called the indication. The engineer said he did not hear these employees call the indication, and, because of the curve to the left, he did not see the signal until the engine was within a few feet north of it. Then he saw the stop indication displayed by signal 46 and heard the conductor call a warning. He immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the accident

occurred before the brakes became effective. The train for which the route was lined did not clear the interlocking until 2 minutes after the derailment occurred.

Under regulations of the T. R. R. A. governing the operation of trains of other lines on the lines of the T. R. R. A., the operating officials of other lines are required to know that crews are properly qualified and are familiar with the territory before employees are assigned to operate trains on the lines of the T. R. R. A. The members of the crew of Extra 1708 were employees of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and the conductor was the only member of the crew qualified to operate trains on the lines of the T. R. R. A. The engineer was an experienced employee, but he had not previously operated an engine over this territory. He said that prior to making the trip involved he informed the conductor that he was not familiar with the territory, and the conductor informed him that he would be on the engine throughout the trip. However, the conductor, who was killed in the accident, was on the rear part of the tender. In this case, if all members of the crew of Extra 1708 had been qualified to operate this train on the line of the T. R. R. A., this accident would have been averted.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure of the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company to provide qualified employees to operate its train on the line of the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this sixteenth day of October, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.