

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2723  
THE MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR HUGHART, MICH., ON  
AUGUST 19, 1943

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Michigan Central  
Date: August 19, 1943  
Location: Hughart, Mich.  
Kind of accident: Derailment  
Train involved: Passenger  
Train number: 108  
Engine number: 4626  
Consist: 6 cars  
Speed: 30 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable, train orders  
and manual-block system  
Track: Single; 2° curve; 0.204 percent  
ascending grade eastward  
Weather: Clear  
Time: About 12:42 p. m.  
Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured  
Cause: Obstruction on rail

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2723

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

THE MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY .

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September 20, 1943.

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Accident near Hughart, Mich., on August 19, 1943, caused  
by an obstruction on rail.

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

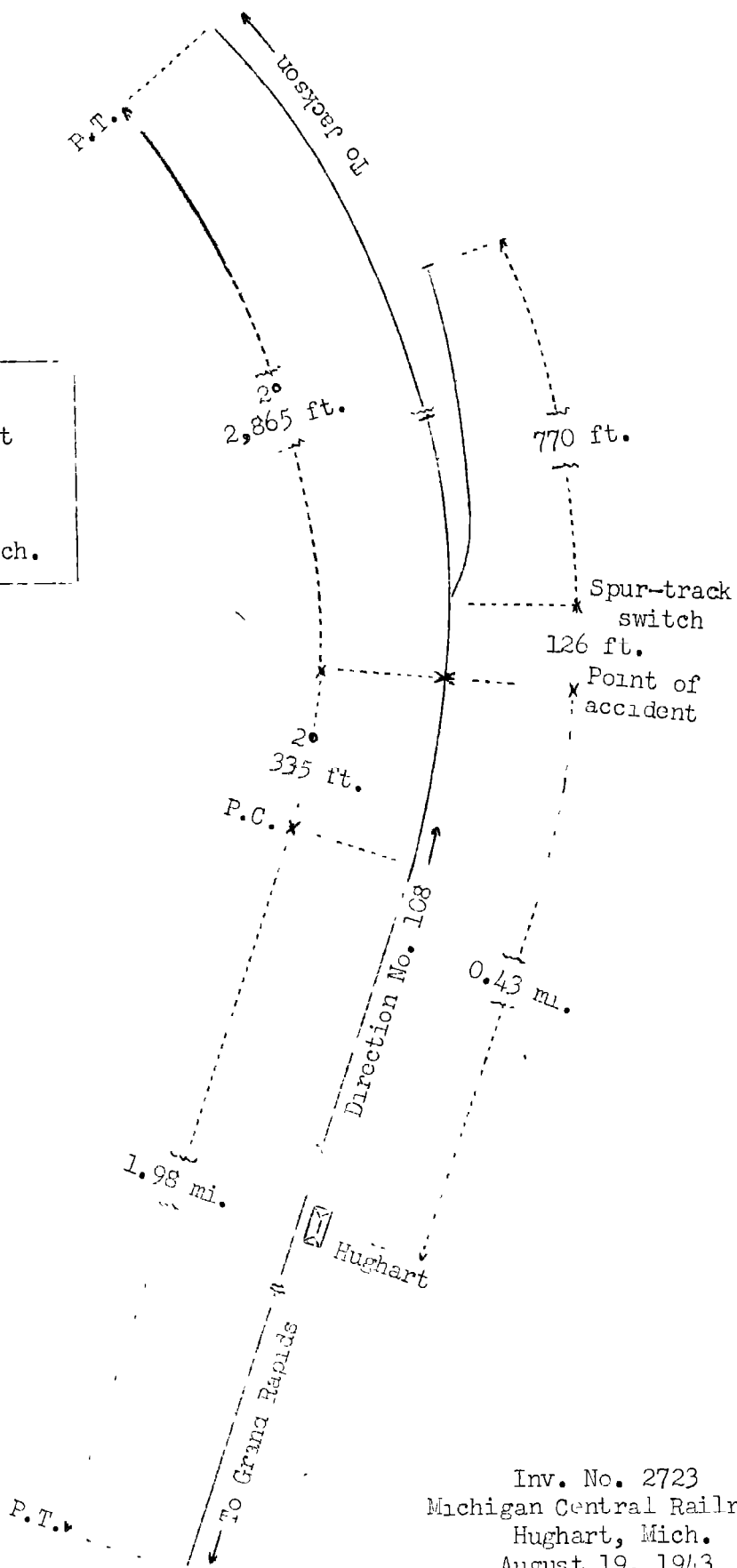
PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 19, 1943, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the Michigan Central Railroad near Hughart, Mich., which resulted in the death of one employee 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 Commissioner Patterson for consideration and disposition.

- o Jackson, Mich. 92.21 mi.
- X Point of accident 0.43 mi.
- o Hughart 1.83 mi.
- o Grand Rapids, Mich.



Inv. No. 2723  
 Michigan Central Railroad  
 Hughart, Mich.  
 August 19, 1943

### Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Michigan Division extending between Grand Rapids and Jackson, Mich., 94.47 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 a manual-block system. The accident occurred at a point 0.43 mile east of the station at Hughart. From the west there was a tangent 1.98 miles in length, which was followed by a 2° curve to the left 335 feet to the point of accident and 2,865 feet beyond. The grade for east-bound trains was 0.09 percent descending 700 feet, then there were, successively, a vertical curve 500 feet, a 0.094-percent ascending grade 500 feet and a 0.204-percent ascending grade 235 feet to the point of accident and 265 feet beyond.

The track structure consisted of 105-pound rail, 39 feet in length, on 24 ties to the rail length. It was single-spiked, fully tieplated and laid on 8 inches of gravel ballast. A facing-point switch for east-bound movements was located 126 feet east of the point of accident. This switch provided entry to a spur track on the south side of the main track.

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

### Description of Accident

No. 108, an east-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 4626, of the 4-6-2 type, one baggage car, one mail-baggage car, one passenger-baggage car, one coach, one Pullman sleeping car and one passenger-cafe car, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. After an air-brake test was made this train departed from Grand Rapids, 1.83 miles west of Hughart, at 12:35 p. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, on time, passed Hughart at 12:41 p. m., 2 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 30 miles per hour the engine, the first three cars and the front truck of the fourth car were derailed.

The front wheels of the engine truck were derailed to the right at a point 126 feet west of the spur-track switch and continued in line with the track 196.1 feet to the frog of the switch, where the general derailment occurred. The engine stopped upright, with the front end about 475 feet east of the point of derailment and about 60 feet south of the main track. The cab was practically demolished, steam and water connections were broken and the engine was otherwise damaged. The tender became detached from the engine and stopped upright, with its front end against the left side of the engine cab, and was badly damaged. The first three cars and the front truck of the fourth car were derailed. The first and second cars were badly damaged, and the third and fourth cars were slightly damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 12:42 p. m.

A traveling fireman, who was on the engine, was killed, and the baggageman was injured.

Discussion

No. 108 was moving on a 2° curve to the left at an estimated speed of 30 miles per hour, in territory where the maximum authorized speed was 60 miles per hour, when the front wheels of the engine truck became derailed. At the point of derailment the superelevation was 3 inches and the gage was 4 feet 8-3/4 inches. According to A. R. E. A. tables the maximum safe speed on this curve was 80 miles per hour. As the train was approaching the point where the accident occurred, the engineer and a traveling fireman were maintaining a lookout ahead from the engine cab. The air brakes had functioned properly en route and the engine had been riding smoothly. When the engine reached a point 335 feet east of the western end of the curve the engineer heard an unusual noise at the front end of the engine and felt the engine lurch and sway. He immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position, but the general derailment occurred before the brakes became effective.

Examination disclosed that prior to the accident there was no defective condition of the engine, and there was no indication of dragging equipment or defective track. Beginning at a point 126 feet west of the spur-track switch, a flange mark appeared on the top of the head of the high rail. It extended diagonally from the inner corner to the outer corner and was 19 feet long. Extending from the east end of this mark a distance of 196 feet to the frog of the switch, the ties bore wheel marks outside the high rail and inside the low rail. East of the frog the track was torn up to the point where the engine stopped.

The investigation disclosed that children playing in the vicinity had placed stones on the high rail immediately west of the point where the flange mark appeared on the rail. These stones caused the right front engine-truck wheel to be raised high enough for its flange to cross over the head of the high rail.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by an obstruction on rail.

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

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.