

Copy: Mr. E. W. Webb
Mr. J. G. Gonzalez

ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

MANUFACTURING AND TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT

INTER-OFFICE
CORRESPONDENCE

MAIL ADDRESS: BOX 688, WILMINGTON, DEL.
FREIGHT ADDRESS: CARNEY'S POINT, N. J.
TELEPHONE: PENNSGROVE, N. J. 280, EXTENSION 219

January 19, 1937

Memorandum: Mr. O. B. Lewis

Dr. Graham Edgar

Mr. R. A. Kehoe

Mr. H. W. Kaley

We are attaching hereto copy of our report on the accident

occurring on Monday, January 11, on west-bound Erie freight train

which was wrecked about one-half mile west of Olean, New York, in

which a carload of ETHYL Fluid drums were involved.

We are also attaching hereto copy of our letter today to

Mr. J. G. Taylor commenting upon a report made by Mr. R. C. Murphy,

Division Manager, etc

this a

A:E

J. H. Schaefer

KE 0000865

REPORT OF ACCIDENT AT OLEAN

On Monday morning, January 11, at 1:30 A.M. part of a west-bound Erie freight train of 90 cars was wrecked about one-half mile west of the Olean, New York station, about one hundred yards west of intersection of the Erie and Pennsylvania tracks. The wreck occurred between two parts of the Socony-Vacuum Oil refinery. Its cause was reported by railroad officials as a broken arch bar on the thirty-seventh car which caused this car to jump the track.

The engine and first thirty-six cars were undamaged; the next twenty-eight cars were piled up in a mass of wreckage, all being damaged in varying degrees; finally the last twenty-five cars and the caboose remained on the track and were undamaged. Slight injuries were sustained by two of the train crew in the caboose.

The twenty-eight wrecked cars were strewn along both sides of the track for about two hundred yards, and were piled quite high especially at the point where the first of the wrecked cars finally landed. Many of the cars went beyond this main mass of debris and several did not reach it. Apparently the cars which sustained the greatest damage were in this one pile, the ones thrown to either side or at either end of the pile being only slightly damaged.

Immediately after the wreck the main pile of wreckage caught fire. Though the Socony-Vacuum fire department arrived within ten minutes and the city of Olean department within twenty minutes after the wreck, the wreckage continued to burn with occasional explosions until two or three o'clock Monday afternoon.

In the middle of the main body of wreckage and at the center of the fire was car MC 97801 containing 40 drums of "Q" Fluid. The order of cars immediately preceding and following this car in the train, their contents, and extent of damage is shown below:

No. 49	-	CDLX 317	-	Empty tank	-	main pile	-	badly damaged
50	-	QTX 8221	-	Linseed Oil	-	" "	-	destroyed
51	-	PRR 50444	-	Dextrine	-	" "	-	"
52	-	MC 97801	-	"Q" Fluid	-	" "	-	badly damaged
53	-	UNIX 2035	-	Empty Refrig.	-	" "	-	"
54	-	PSR 35673	-	"	-	" "	-	"
55	-	RI 140439	-	Magnesia	-	south side	-	slightly damaged
56	-	GB&Q 15201	-	Meal	-	north side	-	"

Apparently the order of cars in the train had no bearing on where they finally landed. In the main pile of debris along with the car of Fluid was the first car to jump the track, containing cane sugar, at least one car of miscellaneous merchandise. Several empty cars, a carload of vegetable shortening, a tank car of linseed oil, a car of dextrine. Most of the cars in this pile were so badly damaged by the wreck and fire that no material was salvaged.

The car containing "Q" Fluid was badly dented at one end and quite badly burned throughout. Three of the four "Poisonous" placards were completely destroyed but the fourth on one end of the car was in perfect condition. It should have been quite conspicuous at the time the wreckage was being cleared away. One of the "Notice to Carriers" labels was completely destroyed. The other one was on the bottom of the car as it lay in the wreckage and was only partially legible when the car was lifted from the pile.

The Ethyl Gasoline Corporation was notified of the wreck about 3:30 Tuesday afternoon. Railroad officials were immediately warned by telephone to cease work in

the vicinity of the car of drums pending arrival of representatives from the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation. Four men from the New York Division reported at the scene of the wreck before midnight Tuesday. They took shifts watching the wreck to keep workmen and all others away from the ETHYL drums. Two men from the Manufacturing Department arrived Wednesday morning at ten o'clock.

Before any Ethyl men arrived at the scene, several full drums, leaking ones, and empties had been removed from the car and set beside the track. The car had been set on tracks and moved to a siding about a quarter of a mile east of the wreck. When Barnum and Johnson arrived they found this status: Along the track, seven full drums, three partially full with bad leaks, and seven completely empty; inside the car, twenty-three drums, of which twelve were apparently full, eleven empty. Thus all forty drums were accounted for. The field representatives had done an excellent job of supervising the handling of the drums which had been removed from the car and of policing the wreck to keep every one away from the Fluid. Any possible hazard was incurred before an Ethyl man arrived at the scene. It is the opinion of the Ethyl men present that no one received serious exposure, though undoubtedly the drums and car were handled unsafely before their arrival.

Wednesday the Ethyl men continued to supervise handling of the drums and the car, and ordered a truck sent from the plant with safety equipment and facilities for transporting all drums to the plant. They also treated all doubtful spots with hydrochloric acid to eliminate all possible danger, secured release of the drums by railroad officials, arranged for burning all wreckage which might possibly have been contaminated with Fluid.

Immediately adjacent to the Fluid car in the pile of wreckage had been a car of vegetable shortening compound, which had not been destroyed in the fire. All metal drums of this compound which were at all dented or punctured, all metal cans which were not sealed with a clamped lid, and all wooden containers were ordered burned to eliminate any danger from possible contamination by "Q" Fluid or its fumes.

Again Wednesday night the Ethyl men stood watch to see that no one went near the car or the drums along the track. Thursday they transferred Fluid from leaking drums to good ones, loaded all drums from the ground and from the car to the truck. Regulation equipment was used for all this work. The drums were thoroughly washed with water and kerosene before they were loaded to the truck. One drum, which had been almost full of Fluid though it contained a six-inch hole in one end, was emptied to another drum, washed thoroughly with kerosene and burned before being loaded to the truck. Other leakers were loaded with small amounts of Fluid still in them. As the truck was loaded it contained nineteen full drums, two partially full, and twenty-three empty drums. The total of forty-four accounts for the forty from the car and four good drums sent from the plant.

The truck was to have left Olean Friday morning. It arrived at the plant Saturday noon with the drums in as good condition apparently as when they left Olean.

The only work left for Friday in connection with the wreck was supervising the burning of the car which had contained the drums. M. P. Mardock remained in Olean to supervise this operation.

KE

0000867