

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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REPORT NO. 3654  
BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAIL ROAD COMPANY  
IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT REMICK JCT., OHIO, ON  
SEPTEMBER 7, 1955

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SUMMARY

Date: September 7, 1955

Railroad: Baltimore and Ohio

Location: Renick Jct., Ohio

Kind of accident: Collision

Equipment involved: Mail and express : Motor-truck  
train

Train number 29

Locomotive number: 5049

Consist 15 cars

Estimated speeds 70 m. p. h. . 35-40 m. p. h.

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

Track: Single, tangent, 0.03 percent  
ascending grade westward

Highway: Tangent, crosses track at angle of  
70°, level

Weather Clear

Time 6.05 p. m.

Casualties: 3 killed, 6 injured

Cause. Motor-truck occupying rail-highway  
grade crossing immediately in front  
of approaching train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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REPORT NO. 3654

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

BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAIL ROAD COMPANY

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November 1, 1955

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Accident at Renick Jct., Ohio, on September 7, 1955,  
caused by a motor-truck occupying a rail-highway  
grade crossing immediately in front of an  
approaching train.

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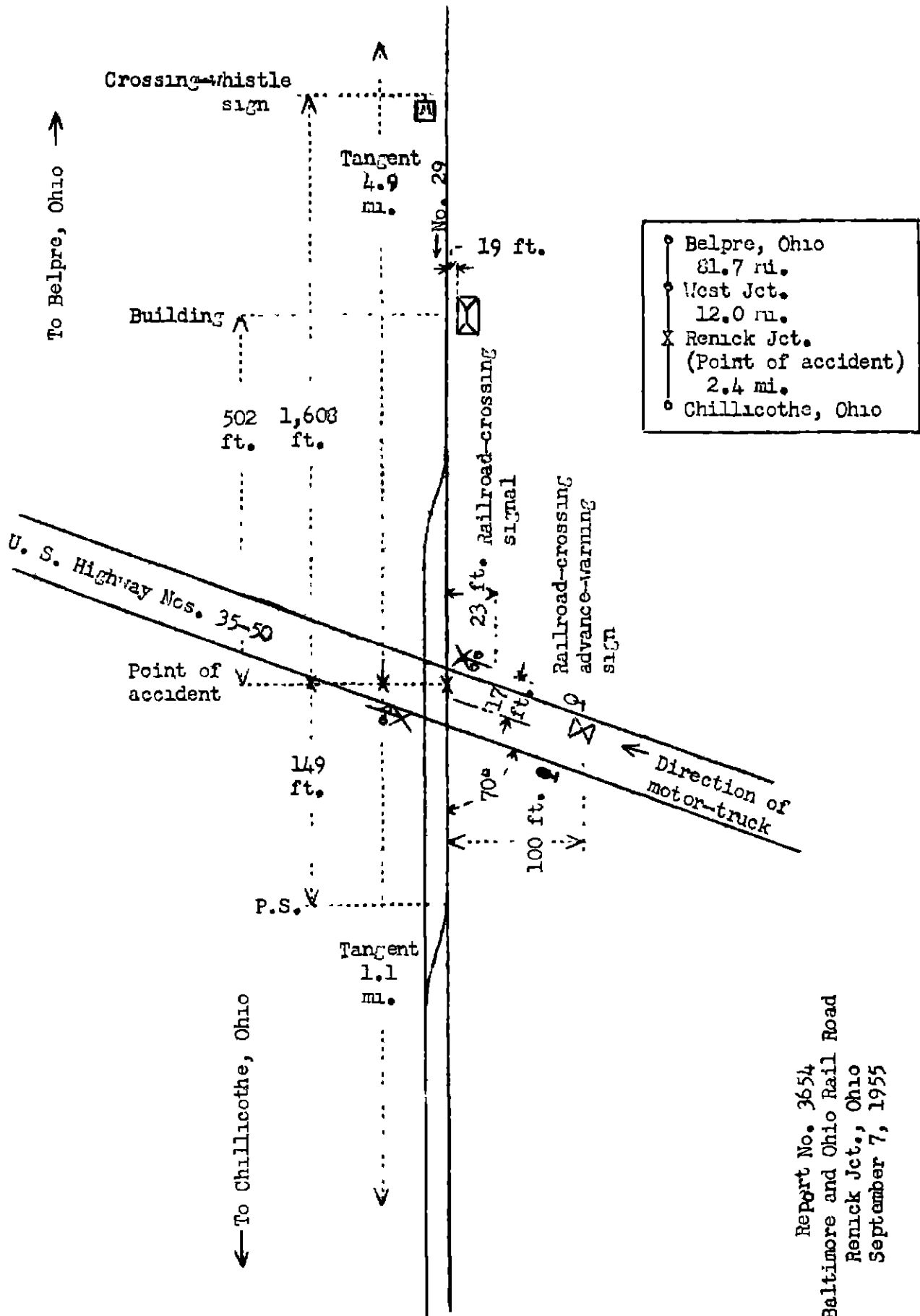
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

CLARKE, Commissioner:

On September 7, 1955, there was a collision between  
a mail and express train on the Baltimore and Ohio Rail  
Road and a motor-truck at a rail-highway grade crossing  
at Renick Jct., Ohio, which resulted in the death of three  
occupants of the motor-truck, and the injury of three  
railway mail clerks and three train-service employees.  
This accident was investigated in conjunction with a  
representative of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

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



Report No. 3654  
 Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road  
 Renick Jct., Ohio  
 September 7, 1955

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Ohio Division extending between Belpre and Chillicothe, Ohio, 96.1 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders, and an automatic block-signal system. The accident occurred on the main track at Renick Jct., 93.7 miles west of Belpre, where the railroad is crossed at grade by U. S. Highway Nos. 35 - 50. In this vicinity an auxiliary track several thousand feet in length parallels the main track on the north. The east switch of a crossover which connects the two tracks is located in the main track at a point 149 feet west of the point of accident. This switch is facing-point for west-bound movements. The railroad is tangent throughout a distance of 4.9 miles immediately east of the crossing and 1.1 miles westward. The grade is 0.03 percent ascending westward at the point of accident. In the vicinity of the point of accident the track is laid on a fill approximately 15 feet in height.

U. S. Highway Nos. 35 - 50 is tangent throughout a distance of several hundred feet on each side of the crossing and intersects the railroad at an angle of approximately 70°. It is surfaced with bituminous material and is 28 feet in width. A plank is laid on each side of each rail throughout the width of the crossing, and the remaining area of the crossing is surfaced with bituminous material to the level of the tops of the rails. The grade for north-bound vehicles approaching the crossing is practically level.

A circular railroad-crossing advance-warning sign is located on each side of the highway at a point approximately 100 feet south of the railroad. Each of these signs is mounted on a post and bears two diagonal lines intersecting at right angles and the letters "RR". A white warning sign is painted on the surface of the highway opposite the advance-warning signs. It consists of two diagonal intersecting lines and the letters "RR" between two stripes which extend across the northward traffic lane. A railroad-crossing signal of the flashing-light type is located 17 feet east of the center-line of the highway and 23 feet south of the main track. This signal consists of a standard cross buck mounted on a mast approximately 13 feet above the level of the highway. The cross buck bears the words "RAILROAD CROSSING"

in black letters on a white background. Two hooded red lamps are mounted back-to-back at each end of a horizontal bar which is attached to the same mast approximately 8 feet above the level of the highway. A reflectorized sign bearing the numeral "2" and the word "TRACKS" is mounted on the mast above the lamps, and a reflectorized sign bearing the words "STOP ON RED SIGNAL" is mounted below the lamps. The warning aspect is displayed by the alternate illumination of the lamps when a west-bound train occupies any portion of the main track throughout a distance of 3,030 feet immediately east of the crossing. A similar signal is located in the northwest angle of the intersection. A crossing-whistle sign for west-bound trains is located 1,608 feet east of the crossing.

This carrier's operating rules read in part as follows:

Engine Whistle Signals.

14. The whistle must be sounded at whistle posts  
\* \* \*

Note.--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds and "--" for long sounds. \* \* \*

Sound.	Indication.
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(1) -- -- o --	Approaching public crossings at grade, to be prolonged or repeated until crossing is reached.
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Headlights.

18. The headlights will be displayed to the front of every train by day and night. \* \* \*

Motor vehicle laws of the State of Ohio read in part as follows:

GRADE CROSSINGS

\* \* \*

4511.62 Prohibition against driving across grade crossings. (GC 3307-60)

No person shall drive a vehicle across a railroad grade crossing in the following instances:

(A) When a clearly visible electric or mechanical signal device gives warning of the immediate approach of a train,

\* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for the train involved was 70 miles per hour.

#### Description of Accident

No. 29, a west-bound first-class mail and express train, consisted of steam locomotive 5049, two mail cars, one baggage car, one dining car, one baggage-express car, three express cars, one mail car, five express cars, and one coach, in the order named. The sixth car was of steel-underframe construction, and the other cars were of all-steel construction. This train passed Belore at 3 50 p. m., on time, passed West Jct., 12.0 miles east of the point of accident and the last open office, at 5 52 p. m., 17 minutes late, and while moving at a speed of 70 miles per hour it struck a motor-truck at a rail-highway grade crossing at Renick Jct., where the railroad is crossed at grade by U. S. Highway Nos. 35 - 50.

The vehicle involved was a 1955 model six-cylinder Ford pickup truck owned by Joseph Silken and Company, Columbus, Ohio. It bore Ohio 1955 license No. 4 MQ 126. At the time of the accident it was occupied by the driver and two other persons. This vehicle was moving northward on U. S. Highway Nos. 35 - 50 at a speed of from 35 to 40 miles per hour when it entered the crossing and was struck by No. 29.

The locomotive, the first eleven cars, the rear truck of the twelfth car, and the front truck of the thirteenth car of No. 29 were derailed. The locomotive stopped between the main track and the auxiliary track and parallel to them. The front end was approximately 700 feet west of the point of derailment. The first 10 cars stopped in various positions on or near the tracks between points approximately 325 feet and 650 feet west of the point of derailment. The other derailed cars stopped approximately in line with the main track. The locomotive was considerably damaged. The first, second, third, fifth, and sixth cars were demolished, the fourth car was badly damaged, the seventh to the eleventh cars, inclusive, were somewhat damaged; and the twelfth car was slightly damaged. The motor-truck was demolished.

The engineer, the conductor, and the train baggageman of No. 29 were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 6 05 p. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement over the crossing was 22.8 trains. During the 24-hour period beginning at 12 01 p. m., September 15, 1955, 4,280 automobiles, 2,116 motor-trucks, 27 buses, and 17 other vehicles passed over the crossing.

#### Discussion

As No. 29 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead from their respective positions in the cab of the locomotive. The conductor and the train baggageman were in the first car, and the flagman was in the rear car. The speed was 70 miles per hour, as indicated by the tape of the speed-recording device. The brakes of the train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The enginemen said that the headlight was lighted brightly and that the engineer began to sound the grade-crossing whistle signal in the vicinity of the crossing-whistle sign and prolonged the signal until the locomotive reached the crossing. The locomotive bell was ringing during this time. The fireman said that he first saw the motor-truck when it was between 1,000 and 1,500 feet south of the crossing. He estimated that its speed at that time was between 40 and 50 miles per hour, and he said that it continued toward the crossing at approximately the same speed. When he became aware that it would enter the crossing immediately in front of the train there was not sufficient time to take action to reduce the speed of the train. From the engineer's position in the cab the truck was not visible before the collision occurred.

From marks on the track structure it appears that the engine truck was derailed to the north immediately west of the crossing by parts of the motor-truck which became wedged under the front of the locomotive. These wheels continued in line with the track to the east switch of the crossover. The general derailment occurred at the latter point.



There were no surviving occupants of the motor-truck. The driver of an automobile which was following the truck said that the truck approached the crossing at a speed of 35 or 40 miles per hour. He said that the flashing-light warning signal at the crossing was in operation as the train approached, but he was uncertain as to whether the whistle was sounded or the locomotive bell was ringing. He said that apparently the driver of the truck was unaware of the approach of the train until immediately before the truck entered the crossing. At that time the driver of the truck applied the brakes and turned toward the left, but he was unable to stop short of the crossing. The fireman and the flagman of No. 29 said that after the train stopped the flashing-light warning signal was operating properly.

As a vehicle approaches the crossing from the south, the driver's view of an approaching west-bound train is somewhat obstructed by trees until the vehicle reaches a point 275 feet south of the crossing. Between this point and the crossing the only obstruction to the view of an approaching train is a small building located 502 feet east of the crossing and 19 feet south of the main track. From points 275 feet, 50 feet, and 25 feet south of the crossing an approaching west-bound train is visible at distances of 2,215 feet, 1,491 feet, and 4,625 feet, respectively.

Cause

This accident was caused by a motor-truck occupying a rail-highway grade crossing immediately in front of an approaching train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this first day of November, 1955.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,  
Secretary.