

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY CONCERNING
AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE CINCINNATI & LAKE
ERIE RAILROAD AT ELK CREEK SIDING, OHIO, ON JUNE '30, 1932

July 27, 1932

To the Commission:

On June 30, 1932, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Cincinnati & Lake Erie Railroad at Elk Creek Siding, Ohio, which resulted in the death of 2 passengers and 7 employees, and the injury of 3 passengers and 2 employees.

Location and method of operation

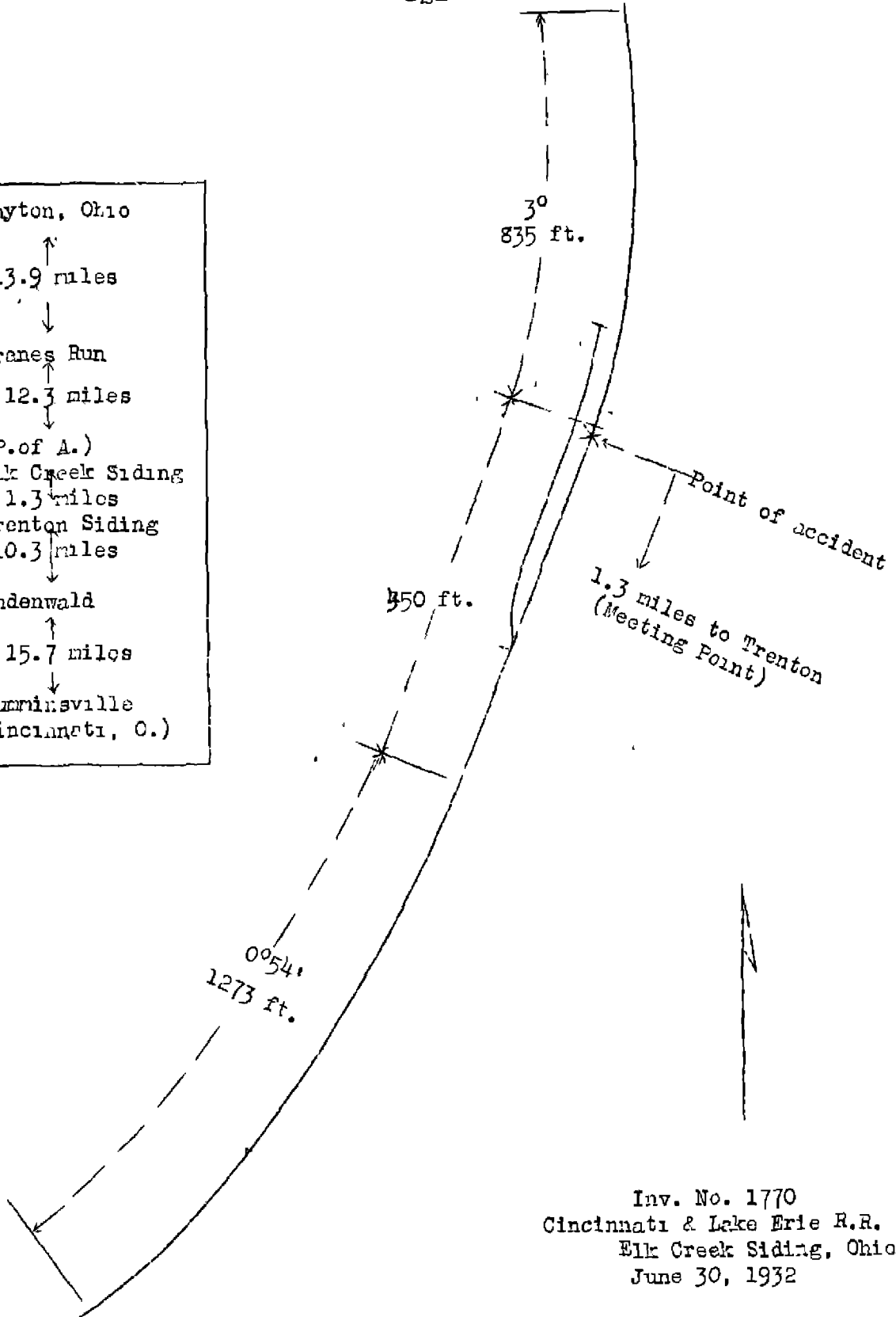
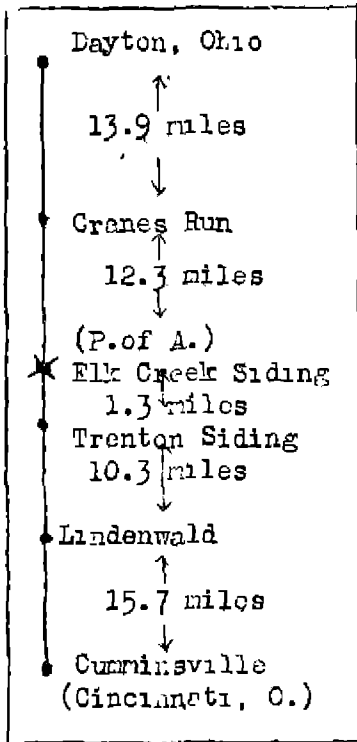
This accident occurred on the Cincinnati Division, an electric line extending between Dayton and Cumminsville (Cincinnati), Ohio, a distance of 53.5 miles; in the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by time-table and train orders, no block-signal system being in use. The accident occurred on the main track, opposite the siding at Elk Creek; approaching this point from the south, there is a $0^{\circ} 54'$ curve to the left 1,273 feet in length, followed by 450 feet of tangent, the accident occurring on this tangent near its northern end. Approaching from the north there is a 3° curve to the right 835 feet in length, followed by the tangent on which the accident occurred. The grade for northbound trains is 1.48 per cent ascending until the tangent track is reached, this tangent being practically level, while the grade for southbound trains is 0.5 per cent descending until the tangent is reached.

Owing to a bluff covered with trees on the west side of the track, also the curve north of the tangent, the view is restricted to about 800 or 1,000 feet.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 6.37 a.m.

Description

Northbound passenger train No. 10 consisted of motor 303, of all-steel construction, and was in charge of Conductor-Motorman Brosey. At Lindenwald, the initial terminal, 10.3 miles south of Trenton, Conductor-Motorman Brosey received a copy of train order No. 4, containing instructions to meet extra 34 at North Trenton. Train No. 10 left Lindenwald at 6.05 a.m., according to the train



Inv. No. 1770
Cincinnati & Lake Erie R.R.
Elk Creek Siding, Ohio
June 30, 1932

sheet, on time, and stopped at Trenton to take on a passenger, but instead of complying with the meet order, train No. 10 then departed from Trenton and collided with extra 34, 1.3 miles beyond while traveling at a speed estimated to have been between 35 and 40 miles per hour.

Southbound freight train extra 34 consisted of motor 34 and a box car, both having wooden bodies with steel-underframes, and was in charge of Conductor Shank and Motorman Bowman. At Cranes Run Siding, 13.6 miles north of Trenton, Conductor Shank received train order No. 4, previously referred to, the order being made complete at 6.12 a. m. Extra 34 departed from that point immediately thereafter, and collided with train No. 10 while traveling at a speed estimated to have been between 35 and 40 miles per hour.

The freight train shoved the passenger train backward a distance of about 55 feet, and motor 34 telescoped passenger motor 303 a distance of 33 feet, the freight motor was equipped with a rounded steel nose on its front end, and, being somewhat narrower than the passenger car, this apparently enabled it to go inside the steel structure of the passenger motor. The passenger motor was so badly damaged that it was subsequently destroyed. The front truck of each car was derailed. The employees killed were both motormen, also an operator, a car inspector, a freight house employee, a track man, and a car cleaner, all of whom were deadheading, while the employees injured were the conductor of extra 34 and a shop employee.

Summary of evidence

Conductor Shank, of extra 34, stated that his train departed from Cranes Run Siding immediately after receiving train order No. 4. When his train reached Middletown, 4.3 miles north of Trenton Siding, the motorman remarked about the meet with train No. 10, saying that it was going to be a good meet, the motorman's watch then registered 6.30.10 a.m., and the conductor's was exactly the same, which allowed them 4 minutes and 50 seconds to make Trenton Siding before train No. 10 was due at that point, it being scheduled there on the time-table at 6.35 a.m. Conductor Shank and the motorman were both standing up while rounding the curve at the north end of Elk Creek Siding, at which time the speed of the train was about 35 or 40 miles per hour, the conductor was looking ahead and the first intimation he had of anything wrong was on seeing train No. 10 about 1,000 feet distant; he shouted a warning of danger to the motorman and realizing that a collision was imminent he then jumped from the train. Conductor Shank stated that the

motorman sounded the whistle at the time he called a warning of danger but he could not say whether an air brake application was made; the air brakes had been tested, however, and worked properly en route. Conductor Shank stated that a train order meet is made with train No. 10 practically every morning, at or near North Trenton, but usually at North Trenton.

Train Dispatcher Schneider stated that train order No. 4 was issued to train No. 10 at Lindenwald and received over the telephone by Conductor-Motorman Brosey, who repeated and spelled out "North Trenton", the point where the meet was to take place, and the order was made complete to train No. 10 at 5.49 a.m. The first knowledge the dispatcher had of the accident was on receiving a report of it by telephone from Conductor Shank.

Night Foreman Hartman, at Lindenwald, stated he was present when Conductor-Motorman Brosey received train order No. 4 over the telephone from the dispatcher, and he saw him make copy of the train order on the form provided for that purpose, and also heard him repeat the order, giving North Trenton as the meeting point with extra 34.

Conclusions

This accident was caused by failure to obey a meet order, for which Conductor-Motorman Brosey of train No. 10 is responsible.

As a result of the accident both motormen were killed; consequently no statement can be made as to why Conductor-Motorman Brosey failed to obey the meet order. The investigation developed, however, that it was customary for extra 34 to make a train order meet with train No. 10 practically every morning, at or near North Trenton. While a search of the body of Conductor-Motorman Brosey, and also of the wreckage, failed to reveal his copy of train order No. 4, yet at the time he received this order at Lindenwald from Train Dispatcher Schneider by telephone, Night Foreman Hartman heard the conductor-motorman repeat the order to the dispatcher, giving North Trenton as the meeting point with extra 34.

In this connection, attention is called to the fact that the officials of this railroad have not been checking regularly to ascertain whether trainmen make carbon copies of train orders taken over the telephone and preserve such copies for future reference. This is a matter of importance and one which the officials should keep under careful observation.

Conductor-Motorman Brosey entered the service of this railroad on October 27, 1898. At the time of the accident he had been on duty only 37 minutes, prior to which he had been off duty for a period of 15 hours and 20 minutes. All of the other employees involved were also experienced men and at the time of the accident none of them had been on duty in violation of any of the provisions of the hours of service law.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. BORLAND,

Director.