

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY CONCERNING AN
ACCIDENT ON THE CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO & ST.
LOUIS RAILWAY AT SPRINGFIELD, OHIO, ON DECEMBER 8, 1932.

January 13, 1933.

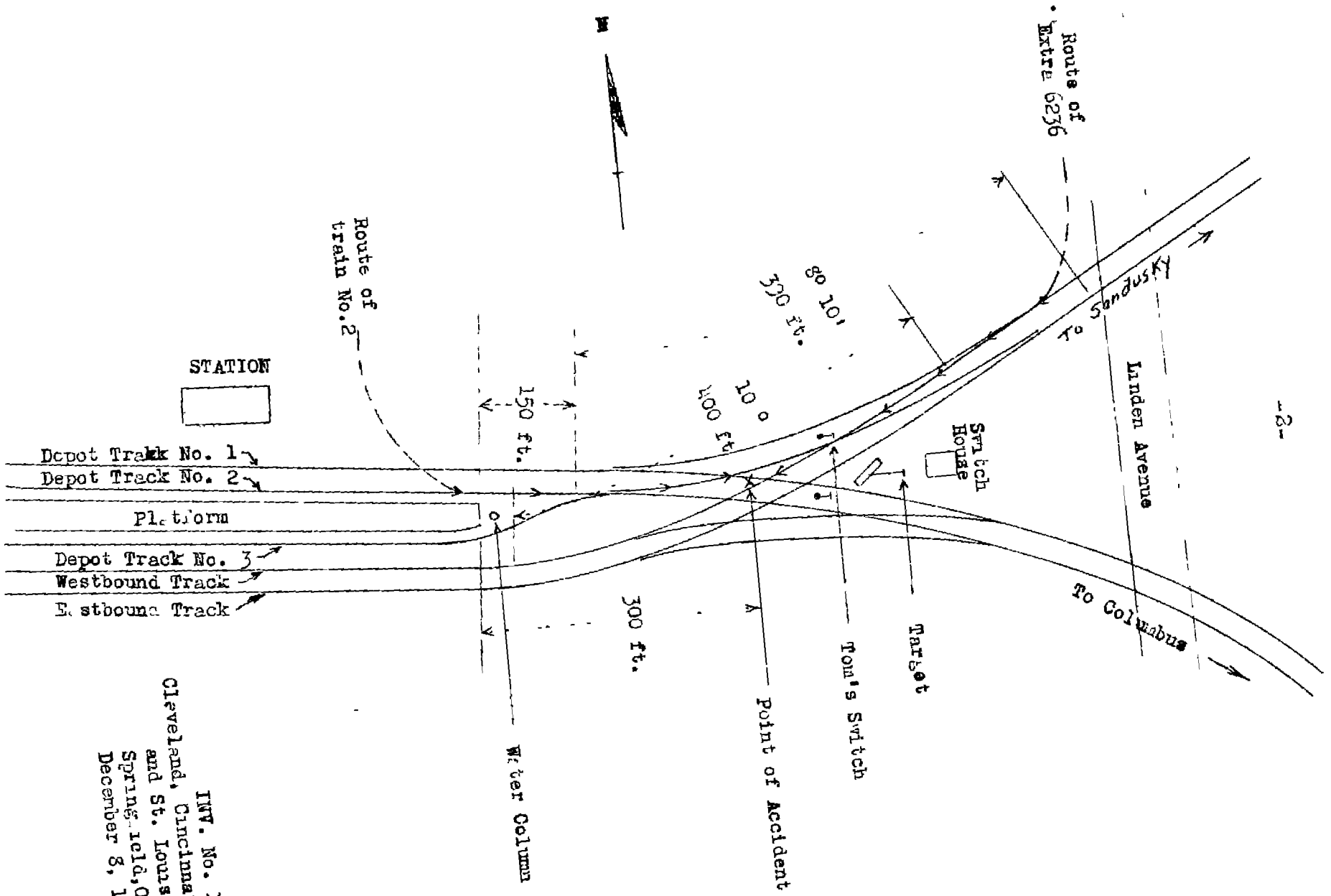
To the Commission:

On December 8, 1932, there was a side collision between a passenger train and a freight train on the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway at Springfield, Ohio, which resulted in the injury of one employee.

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred within yard limits at Springfield on that part of the Cincinnati-Sandusky Division which extends between Cincinnati and Sandusky, Ohio, a distance of 209.8 miles. In the immediate vicinity of the point of accident this is a double-track line and the movements of trains are governed by special time-table instructions covering yard territory. At a point approximately 300 feet east of the station platform the main tracks divide, those leading to the right going to Columbus and to the left to Sandusky, forming a wye. Between the station and the main tracks there are located, from north to south, depot tracks 1, 2, and 3, which connect with the main tracks leading to Sandusky and Columbus. The accident occurred at the fouling point of the switch that connects the westbound main track on the Sandusky line with depot track 2. Approaching this point from the east, the westbound track of the Sandusky line is tangent for a distance of 1,020 feet, followed by a 10° curve to the right approximately 400 feet in length, the accident occurring on this curve at a point approximately 250 feet from its western end. Beginning at the eastern end of the station platform on depot track 2, the track is tangent for a distance of about 150 feet, followed by an 8° 10' curve to the left extending to the junction with the Sandusky westbound track, 390 feet distant. The grade is practically level.

A grade crossing target, 27 feet in height, is located in the angle formed by the wye and 12 feet east of the target is the switch tender's office. The target indications are vertical for movements to and from the Columbus line, diagonal for movements in either direction on Sandusky line, and horizontal for stop. A low switch stand is located between the tracks leading to the Columbus line and south of the main tracks of the Sandusky line, at which point the switch tender stands when he gives a signal to an eastbound train on depot track 2 to proceed to the eastbound track on the Sandusky line. Almost directly north of this switch stand and north of the main tracks of the Sandusky line is another switch stand, known as Tom's switch, at which point the switch tender stands when giving signals to westbound trains on the Sandusky line to pass over the Columbus line crossing.



INW. No. 1796
 Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago
 and St. Louis Ry.
 Springfield, Ohio.
 December 8, 1932.

Special time-table instructions provide that between Springfield Yard and West End, movements with the current of traffic will be made with reference to other trains in the same direction, irrespective of class and at restricted speed. They also provide that movements against the current of traffic may be made between Springfield Yard and Linden Ave. on signal from switch tender and under supervision of yardmaster, and that at Linden Avenue trains and engines are not allowed to foul or pass switches until signaled by the switch tender.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 1.50 a.m.

Description

Westbound freight train extra 6236, symbol ON-1, consisted of 57 loaded cars and a caboose, hauled by engine 6236, and was in charge of Conductor Boblett and Engineman Shanahan. This train departed from Springfield Yard, .09 mile east of the passenger station at Springfield, at 1.45 a.m., and was crossing the tracks leading to the Columbus line when it was sideswiped by train No. 2.

Eastbound passenger train No. 2, consisted of 1 combination baggage car and coach, 1 coach, and 5 Pullman sleeping cars, all of steel construction, hauled by engine 6527, and was in charge of Conductor Gainer and Engineman Edington. This train arrived at the passenger station at Springfield at 1.41 a.m., where engine 6607, in charge of Engineman Jordan, was coupled to the head end of the train, ahead of engine 6527. This train started to leave the station at 1.50 a.m., 10 minutes late, but had moved only a short distance and had attained a speed of about 2 or 3 miles per hour when it struck the side of extra 6236.

Engine 6607, of train No. 2, sideswiped the second, third, fourth and fifth cars in the freight train, resulting in their sides being badly damaged and the front trucks of the fourth and fifth cars being derailed. The right front corner of engine 6607 was also damaged; none of the other equipment in either train was derailed. The employee injured was the flagman of extra 6236.

Summary of evidence

Engineman Shanahan, of extra 6236, stated that as his train passed High Street bridge, approximately 1,030 feet east of the point of accident, he received a proceed signal from the switch tender at Linden Avenue. The fireman and head brakeman called it to him and none of them saw any signals other than the proceed signal. As his engine passed the engine of train No. 2 at a speed of about 15 miles per hour he thought that that train was being eased up to the clearance point, as it was just moving, but he then heard a noise, looked around and saw fire flying, and immediately applied the air brakes in emergency, the train breaking in two about the same time.

Engineman Jordan, in charge of the lead engine of train No. 2, stated that after coupling his engine to train No. 2 a few minutes elapsed while the air was tested and water taken. He sent Fireman Davis to have the switch tender send a message and on the fireman's return he sent him back to meet the conductor, who was approaching the head end of the train with the orders, either the conductor or the fireman then told him to go ahead or else gave him a proceed signal. Engineman Jordan rang the bell, sounded two short blasts on the whistle, turned on the headlight, dimmed, and thought he heard the engineman of the second engine also sound his waistle, and just as the train started the fireman boarded the engine and handed him the orders, which he did not read then but intended to read when on straight track. The train was then about 10 minutes late and he was anxious to get started. As he started to leave he saw what he thought was the last portion of a proceed signal from the switch tender, although afterwards he thought it might have been the switch light, and he could see that the track was clear at that time. He did not see the engine of extra 6236 pass, and even when he saw the second or third car in that train he did not realize that he was going to collide with it, as he was under the impression that he could pull out from the depot track with the freight train passing on the main track. Engineman Jordan thought he was familiar with the track arrangement at that point, he had not handled a passenger train in that territory, however, for the past 18 months with the exception of a special train which he handled three days prior to the accident.

None of the other members of the crew of train No. 2 saw any signal given by the switch tender. Fireman Davis, of the lead engine, stated that as he left the switch shanty the switch tender started across the tracks, but he did not pay any attention nor did he notice whether extra 6236 was in sight, while he did not hear the switch tender say anything about it. When he finally got on the engine it was moving and he had no more than handed the orders to the engineman when the latter applied the air brakes and told him to get off.

Switch Tender Garrity, on duty at Linden Avenue, stated that when Fireman Davis came to the switch shanty he told the fireman that extra 6236 would pass through ahead of his train. He told him this while calling the dispatcher, but as the wind was blowing pretty hard it might have prevented the fireman from hearing him. Switch Tender Garrity stated that the target was set diagonally for a movement on the Cincinnati-Bandusky Division and that he stood at Tom's switch so that the engineman of train No. 2 would not see him when he gave a proceed signal for extra 6236. Before extra 6236 passed him, however, he saw steam coming out of the cylinder cocks of one of the engines on train No. 2, and he walked across the tracks ahead of the freight train, shaded his lamp so the crew of that train would not see it, and then gave a stop signal to train No. 2, giving short signals that could not be mistaken for proceed signals. He did not hear the bell ringing on train No. 2 neither did he hear the starting whistle, although he might not have heard it on account of the exhaust from the engine of the freight train, nor did he see the lead-

light burning.

Conclusions.

This accident was caused by Engineman Jordan, of train No. 2, pulling out of the depot track without receiving the proper signal from the switch tender and fouling the westbound main track which was then occupied by extra 6236.

Upon special instructions contained in the time-table, trains must not foul or pass switches at Linden Avenue until signalled by the switch tender. Engineman Jordan thought he saw the last portion of a proceed signal given by the switch tender before starting to pull out, but later said that what he saw probably was a switch light. In the meantime the route had been lined properly for the extra train and when the switch tender saw steam emitting from the cylinder cocks of one of the engines of train No. 2, he gave stop signals which apparently were not observed. Engineman Jordan was too anxious to get started and was not giving the proper attention to the track ahead. It would appear that there was too much haste in getting train No. 2 away from the station. The track at this point leads sharply to the left, cutting off the engineman's view of any train which may be approaching on the Sandusky main track and also cutting off his view of the switch and switch lamp, thus making it essential that the fireman as well as the engineman should be in his proper place before leaving the station. The engineman was in a hurry, however, and possibly mistook a green switch light for the green lantern of the switch tender; he began to pull out just as his fireman was boarding his engine with the orders, the fireman having no opportunity to look out on the left side; an order on Form 31 was delivered to the engineman by the fireman instead of by the conductor personally as required by the rules, and the engineman intended to delay reading the orders until he had gotten away from the station. A little less haste and a little more attention to safety before leaving the station possibly would have prevented the occurrence of this accident.

It appears that while Engineman Jordan had had 19 years' experience as an engineman, he was a regular freight man on the Bellefontaine freight board, had not handled passenger trains out of Springfield with one exception during the past 18 months, and was not familiar with the track layout. The Commission has investigated other accidents in which the engineman involved was more or less unfamiliar with the territory in which he was operating, and due possibly to the present business depression it may be a matter of comparatively frequent occurrence for enginemen to be assigned to territory in which they have not operated trains for many years past. This situation, however, presents a question which supervising officials are supposed to handle, for theirs is the primary responsibility for seeing that men are properly qualified to operate in the territory to which assigned.

Respectfully submitted,
W.P. BORLAND,
Director.