

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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REPORT NO. 3671  
LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY  
IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR GARY, KY., ON  
JUNE 13, 1955

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**SUMMARY**

**Date:** June 13, 1955

**Railroad:** Louisville and Nashville

**Location:** Cary, Ky.

**Kind of accident:** Head-end collision

**Equipment involved:** Track motor-car : Freight  
with trailer : train

**Train number:** : Work Extra  
102

**Engine number:** : Diesel-electric unit  
102

**Consist:** : 20 cars,  
caboose

**Estimated speeds:** 5 m. p. h. : 5 - 10  
m. p. h.

**Operation:** Timetable and train orders

**Track:** Single; 6° curve; 0.41 percent  
descending grade northward

**Weather:** Clear

**Time:** 5:05 p. m.

**Casualties:** 1 killed; 1 injured

**Cause:** Misunderstanding between employees  
involved as to movements which  
were being made

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3631

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

LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY

July 6, 1955

Accident near Cary, Ky., on June 13, 1955, caused by  
a misunderstanding between the employees involved  
as to the movements which were being made.

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

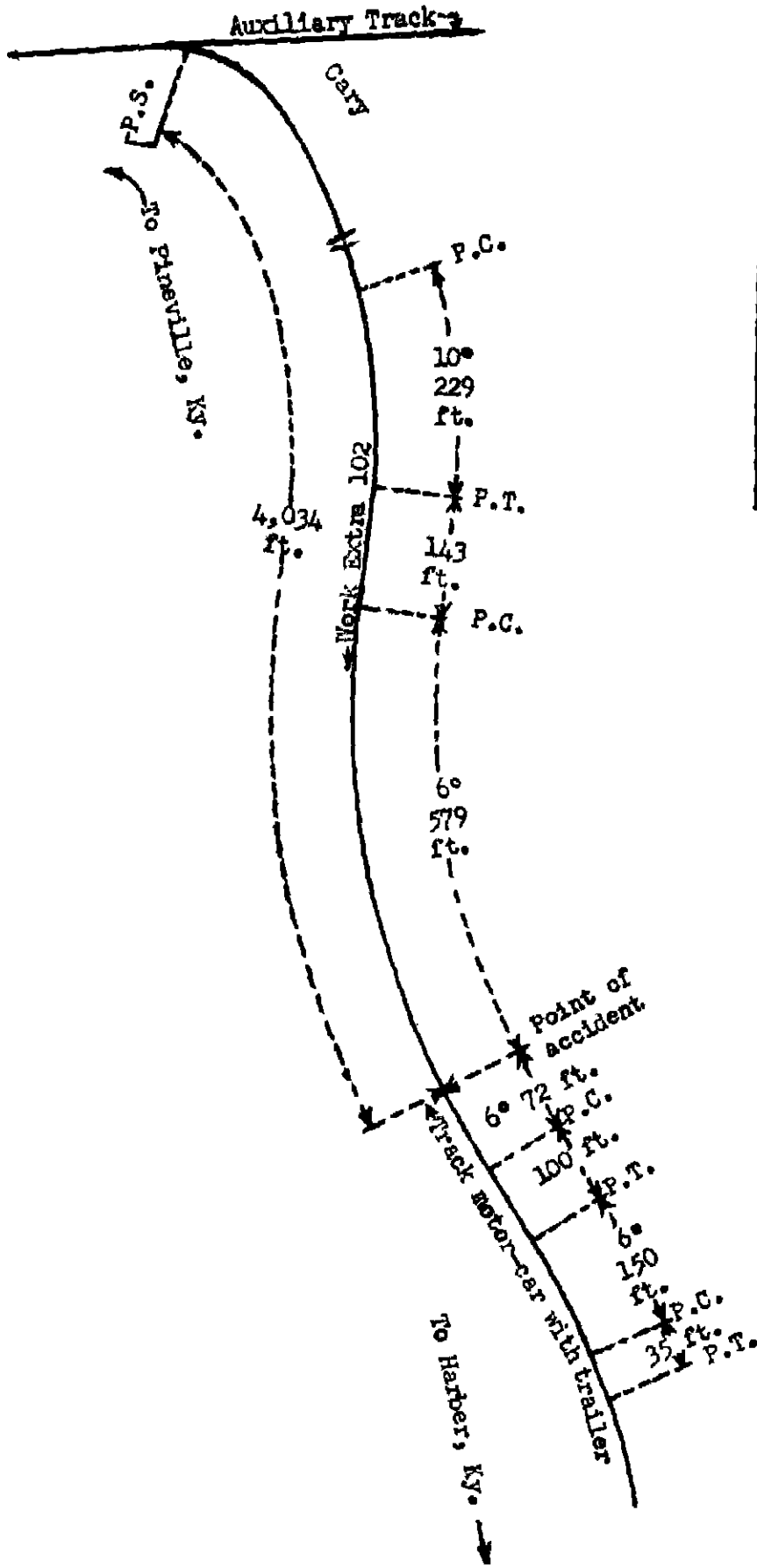
CLARKE, Commissioner:

On June 13, 1955, there was a head-end collision between a track motor-car and trailer, coupled, and a freight train on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad near Cary, Ky., which resulted in the death of one maintenance-of-way employee, and the injury of one maintenance-of-way 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 Clarke for consideration and disposition.

*Misunderstanding*  
*177-B*



●	Pineville, Ky.
	2.96 mi.
●	Cary
	0.63 mi.
✕	Point of accident
	8.68 mi.
●	Harber, Ky.

Report No. 3631  
Louisville and Nashville Railroad  
Near Cary, Ky.  
June 13, 1955

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Cumberland Valley Division extending between Harber and Pineville, Ky., 12.27 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. At Cary, 9.31 miles north of Harber, an auxiliary track diverges eastward from the main track. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 4,034 feet south of the auxiliary-track switch at Cary. From the south there are, in succession, a tangent 35 feet in length, a 6° curve to the left 150 feet, a tangent 100 feet, and a 6° curve to the right 72 feet to the point of accident and 579 feet northward. From the north there are, in succession, a 10° curve to the right 229 feet in length, a tangent 143 feet, and the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade is 0.41 percent descending northward at the point of accident.

Because of curvature of the track and vegetation adjacent to the track, the range of vision between opposing movements in the immediate vicinity of the point of accident is restricted to a distance of about 300 feet.

This carrier's rules and instructions of the Maintenance-of-Way Department read in part as follows:

78. \* \* \*

(e) Protecting Moving Equipment.--In protecting moving track cars, or other roadway equipment, flagman must be kept not less than 70 rail lengths from the object protected; and at a farther distance if conditions require. \* \* \*

126 \* \* \*

Foremen and operators must use the utmost care in running their cars over the road. They \* \* \* shall operate car at all times prepared to stop in less than one-half (1/2) range of vision \* \* \*. When no lineup can be secured, curves, tunnels and dangerous places must be flagged and constant lookout must be kept.

\* \* \*

The maximum authorized speeds are 25 miles per hour for freight trains and 20 miles per hour for track motor-cars while towing other cars.

#### Description of Accident

Track motor-car 5878, towing a trailer, departed north-bound from a point approximately 2-1/2 miles south of Cary about 4:40 p. m. The cars were occupied by a maintenance-of-way foreman, an assistant foreman, and 11 employees. While the track motor-car was moving at a speed of about 5 miles per hour it collided with Work Extra 102 at a point 4,034 feet south of the auxiliary-track switch at Cary.

Work Extra 102, a south-bound freight train, consisted of Diesel-electric unit 102, 20 empty cars, and a oaboose. This train was stopped in the vicinity of the auxiliary-track switch at Cary about 5 p. m. in response to a flagman's signals. The flagman instructed the engineer to watch for a track motor-car between Cary and a point approximately 3 miles south of Cary. The train then departed south-bound, and while moving at a speed of between 5 and 10 miles per hour it collided with the track motor-car and trailer.

The track motor-car and trailer were moved southward a distance of about 75 feet to the point at which the locomotive of Work Extra 102 stopped. They were considerably damaged.

One maintenance-of-way employee who was on the trailer was killed, and one maintenance-of-way employee who was on the trailer was injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 5:05 p. m.

Track motor-car 5878 was powered by a 4-cylinder 20-horsepower engine and was equipped with a 4-speed transmission. It had a metal top and a windshield at the front. It weighed 1,900 pounds and had seating capacity for 10

persons. The trailer was constructed with a flat wooden deck. It weighed 950 pounds. Both the track motor-car and the trailer were equipped with 4-wheel brakes.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 1.9 trains.

#### Discussion

On the day of the accident the maintenance-of-way force was engaged in replacing ties about 2-1/2 miles south of Cary. The camp cars of these employees were located on the auxiliary track at Cary. In this vicinity there is no means of communication with the train dispatcher, and about 4:15 p. m. the assistant foreman instructed one of the members of the force to proceed to Cary and direct the engineer of any south-bound train to run at restricted speed until he met the maintenance-of-way force returning to Cary on the track motor-car. About 4:40 p. m. the other members of the force started for Cary on the track motor-car and trailer. They stopped for several minutes at one point while they unloaded tools, and then continued northward. The foreman and the assistant foreman estimated that they approached the point where the accident occurred at a speed of 5 to 8 miles per hour. They thought the locomotive of Work Extra 102 became visible to them at a distance of from 375 to 450 feet. The assistant foreman, who was operating the track motor-car, disengaged the clutch and applied the brakes immediately after he saw the locomotive. The accident occurred before the track motor-car could be stopped.

The employee who was acting as flagman for the maintenance-of-way force said that soon after he arrived at Cary he observed Work Extra 102 approaching. The train was stopped in response to his signals, and he said he instructed the engineer to run at restricted speed and watch for a north-bound track motor-car between Cary and a point approximately 3 miles south of Cary. The train then departed south-bound.

When Work Extra 102 stopped at Cary the enginemen, the front brakeman, and the flagman were in the control compartment of the locomotive. These employees said that the flagman for the maintenance-of-way force told them to watch for a track motor-car and trailer between that point and a point 3 miles southward. They said the flagman did not tell them which direction the track motor-car would be moving, and the engineer said he assumed that it would be moving southward. After they received these instructions the train proceeded. The locomotive was in backward motion, and the engineer was on the left side in the direction of movement. The engineer said he glanced at the speed-indicating device when the locomotive was about 2,500 feet south of Cary and the speed at that time was 14 miles per hour. The throttle was closed, and he thought the train continued to move at approximately the same speed. He estimated that the track motor-car became visible to him at a distance of about 400 feet. When he saw the car he immediately made an emergency application of the brakes. The collision occurred before the train could be stopped. The engineer said he could easily have stopped short of the car if it had been moving in the opposite direction.

The rules of this carrier provide that when the operator of a track motor-car is unable to secure a line-up of train movements, the movement of his track motor-car on curves and at points where the view is obstructed must be protected by a flagman. In the instant case a flagman was sent ahead of the track motor-car to provide protection for the movement to Cary. The foreman and the assistant foreman thought that since the crew of any south-bound train south of Cary would be expecting to meet them, adequate protection for their movement was provided. They said it had been the practice in the past to issue similar instructions to flagmen. They said that flagmen were instructed to hold opposing trains only when track cars were so heavily loaded that they could not be removed from the track. The flagman who was sent to Cary was aware that the track motor-car would be moving northward, and he said that after his conversation with the engineer he thought the engineer had the same understanding. The engineer said that he had been stopped by flagman under similar circumstances in the past, and it had been his experience that if the track motor-cars were not clear of the



main track they were usually being used to transport heavy material and were protected by a second flagman. He said that if he had known that the track motor-car was moving toward him he would have remained at Cary until it arrived.

The maintenance-of-way force had been stationed at Cary during a period of about 2 weeks prior to the day of the accident. The crew of Work Extra 102 was regularly assigned to operate over the line between Pineville and Harber, and ordinarily this was the only crew which operated over this line. The day of the accident was the first day on which the maintenance-of-way employees had not completed their day's work and returned to Cary before the train passed Cary on its first trip.

During the past 10 years the Commission has investigated 60 collisions, including the present case, in which track motor-cars were involved. These accidents resulted in the death of 95 persons and the injury of 178 persons.

Cause

This accident was caused by a misunderstanding between the employees involved as to the movements which were being made.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this sixth day of July, 1955.

By the Commission, Commissioner Clarke.

(SEAL)

HAROLD D. McCOY,

Secretary.