

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATION NO. 2779
THE LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT
NEAR SPRINGFIELD, KY., ON
FEBRUARY 29, 1944

SUMMARY

Railroad: Louisville & Nashville
Date: February 29, 1944
Location: Springfield, Ky.
Kind of accident: Head-end collision
Equipment involved: Mixed train : Track motor-car
Train number: 36 :
Engine number: 1237 :
Consist: Auxiliary water : Motor-car 1515
car, 2 cars
Estimated speed: 15 m. p. h. : 5 m. p. h.
Operation: Timetable and train orders
Track: Single; 7°12' curve; 0.59 percent
descending grade northward
Weather: Cloudy
Time: 1:08 p. m.
Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured
Cause: Failure to provide protection for
movement of track motor-car

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATION NO. 2779

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

THE LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY

March 15, 1944.

Accident near Springfield, Ky., on February 29, 1944,
caused by failure to provide protection for the
movement of a track motor-car.

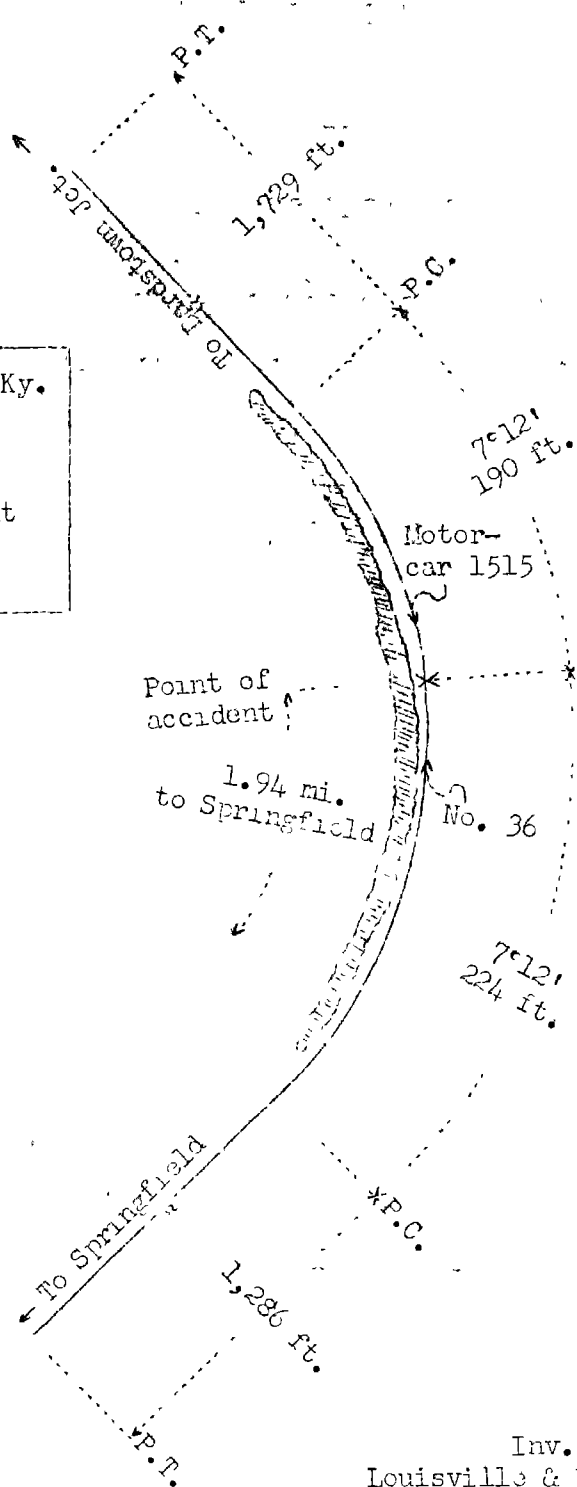
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Chairman.

On February 29, 1944, there was a head-end collision between a mixed train and a track motor-car on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad near Springfield, Ky., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of three employees.

¹Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Commerce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Chairman Patterson for consideration and disposition.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|-----------|
| o | Bardstown Jct., Ky. | 31.69 mi. |
| o | Valley Hill | 3.49 mi. |
| X | Point of accident | 1.94 mi. |
| o | Springfield, Ky. | |



Inv. No. 2779
 Louisville & Nashville Railroad
 Springfield, Ky.
 February 29, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Louisville Division designated as the Bardstown Branch and extending between Springfield and Bardstown Jct., Ky., 37.12 miles. This was a single-track line over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. The accident occurred 1.94 miles north of Springfield. From the south there was a tangent 1,286 feet in length, which was followed by a 7°12' curve to the left 224 feet to the point of accident and 190 feet beyond. From the north there was a tangent 1,729 feet in length, which was followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade for north-bound trains was 0.59 percent descending.

Rules of the Maintenance of Way Department read in part as follows:

126. Keeping Clear of Trains.--Track cars should be clear of the main track ten minutes before passenger trains are due. * * *. Foremen must use the utmost care in running their cars over the road. Curves, tunnels, and other dangerous places should be flagged and a constant lookout should be kept.

If the flagman hears or sees a train approaching, he must place a torpedo on the rail and proceed rapidly toward the approaching train giving a stop signal.

132. Signal Appliances on Motor Cars.--Flags and torpedoes shall be kept on cars at all times, * * *

* * *

Safety rules governing operation of track motor-cars read in part as follows:

25. Before starting, driver must assign seat location to every person riding on car and have thorough understanding as to what part each person is to take in removing the car from track. Men on front of car shall assist driver in keeping lookout and warn of any apparent danger affecting safe operation of car. Men riding rear of car shall keep constant lookout in that direction for trains or cars.

* * *

- 27. * * * The person in charge of the operation of the car must, when practicable, procure information as to movements of trains. * * * In addition to complying with these rules all other possible precautions must be taken to prevent collisions. * * *
- 36. Exceeding speed indicated below is prohibited, except in the case of specially constructed inspection cars--

MOTOR CARS:

- (a) Not otherwise specified--
Maximum.....30 MPH

* * *

- 37. Operate car at all times prepared to stop in less than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) range of vision. Use proper protection in operating around curves. When rails are wet or frosty a much greater distance is required to stop and the driver must take these conditions into account.

The maximum authorized speed for the train involved was 30 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 36, a north-bound second-class mixed train, consisting of engine 1237, one auxiliary water car, one empty tank car and one passenger-baggage car, in the order named, departed from Springfield at 1:05 p. m., 1 hour 50 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it collided with track motor-car 1515 at a point 1.94 miles north of Springfield.

Track motor-car 1515 departed south-bound from Valley Hill, 5.43 miles north of Springfield, about 12:55 p. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 5 miles per hour it collided with No. 36.

Motor-car 1515 was demolished. The front end of engine 1237 was slightly damaged.

From a south-bound motor-car moving in the vicinity of the point of accident, the view of a north-bound engine was restricted to a distance of about 200 feet, because of an embankment on the inside of the curve.

It was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred at 1:08 p. m.

The employees killed and injured were members of a carpenter force.

Discussion

The rules governing operation of track motor-cars on this line provided that flag protection must be furnished in territory where the view is obstructed. Operators of motor-cars were authorized to obtain information, when practicable, regarding the movement of trains, but, under the rules, operators were required to control the speed of motor-cars at all times so that they could be stopped within a distance of one-half the range of vision.

A carpenter force, consisting of a foreman and 12 men, was engaged temporarily in repair work at Valley Hill, about 5 miles north of Springfield. There was no telephone at Valley Hill. About 12:55 p. m., the foreman instructed his men that motor-car 1515 would be used to transport them to Springfield to obtain lunch. No. 36 was due to leave Springfield at 11:15 a. m., but the foreman thought the motor-car would arrive at Springfield prior to the departure of No. 36, because No. 35, a south-bound mixed train, had passed Valley Hill late on its schedule and the equipment of this train was used regularly to operate No. 36. The foreman understood that flag protection was required to protect the movement of the motor-car, and he instructed a member of the force to provide such protection. As the motor-car was approaching the curve on which the accident occurred the foreman and the flagman were maintaining a lookout ahead. The speed of the motor-car was reduced in preparation for the flagman to provide protection, but the motor-car over-ran the point north of the north end of the curve where the foreman intended to stop it, then he saw the approaching train about 200 feet distant. He immediately called a warning to the men on the motor-car, and jumped just before the collision occurred. The fireman of No. 36 saw the motor-car when it was about 200 feet distant, and he called a warning to the engineer, who immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position. The speed of No. 36 was about 15 miles per hour when the collision occurred.

If flag protection had been provided for the motor-car in accordance with the rules, this accident would not have occurred.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide protection for the movement of a track motor-car.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this fifteenth day of March, 1944:

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.