

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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REPORT NO. 3473  
THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS  
RAILROAD COMPANY  
IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR MT. CORY, OHIO, ON  
JUNE 13, 1952

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SUMMARY

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Date: June 13, 1952

Railroad: New York, Chicago and St. Louis

Location: Mt. Cory, Ohio

Kind of accident: Collision

Equipment involved: Freight train : Motor-truck

Train number: 63 :

Engine number: 720 :

Consist: 75 cars, caboose :

Estimated speeds: 50 m. p. h. : 35-50 m. p. h.

Operation: Signal indications

Track: Single; tangent; 0.30 percent  
descending grade westward

Highway: Tangent; crosses track at angle of  
47°02'; level

Weather: Clear

Time: 12:13 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 3 injured

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

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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REPORT NO. 3473

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

THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS RAILROAD COMPANY

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August 13, 1952

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Accident near Mt. Cory, Ohio, on June 13, 1952, caused by  
a motor-truck occupying a rail-highway grade crossing  
immediately in front of an approaching train.

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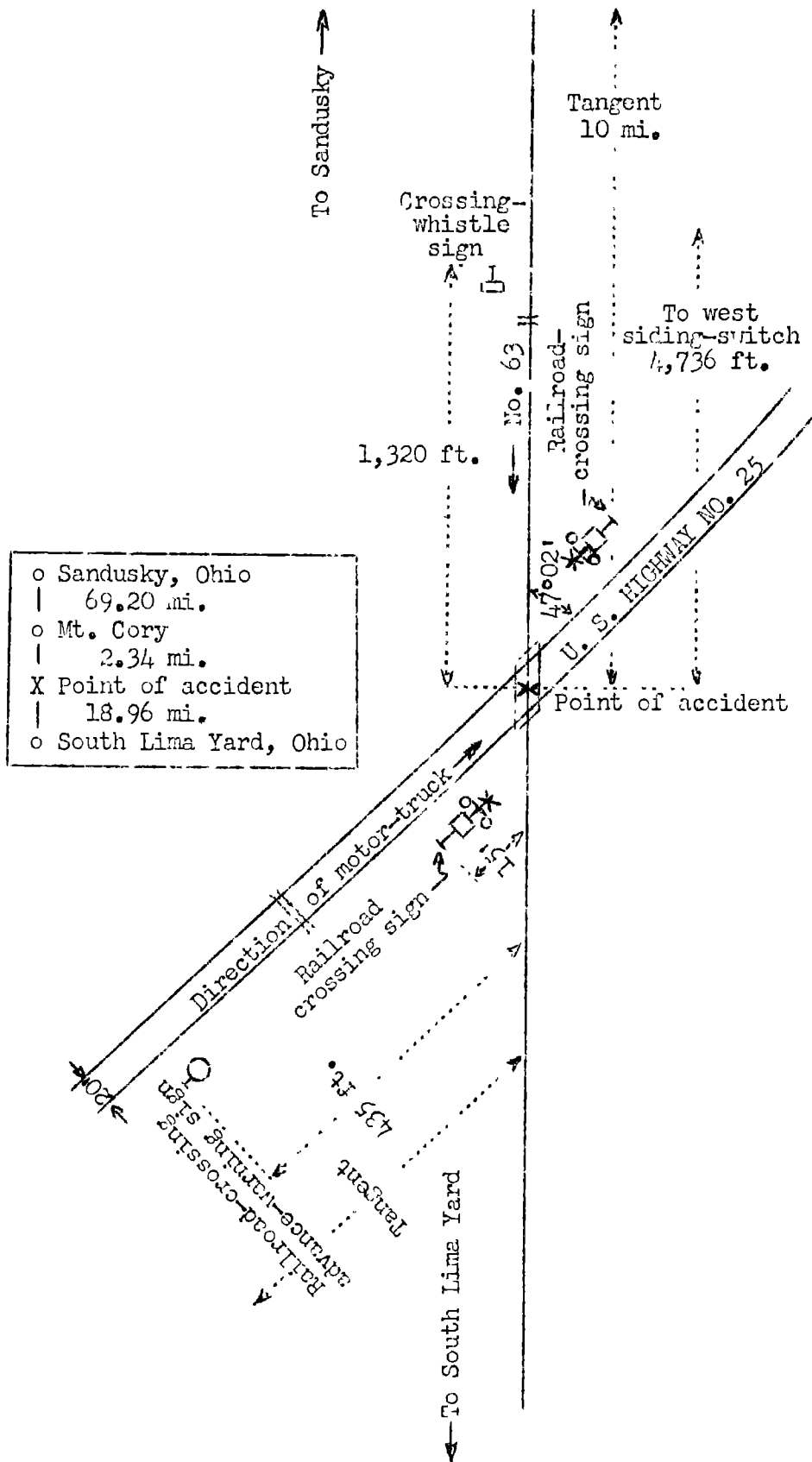
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On June 13, 1952, there was a collision between a freight train on the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad and a motor-truck at a rail-highway grade crossing near Mt. Cory, Ohio, which resulted in the death of the driver of the motor-truck, and the injury of three train-service employees.

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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 Patterson for consideration and disposition.



Report No. 3473  
 New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad  
 Mt. Cory, Ohio  
 June 13, 1952

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Sandusky Division extending between Sandusky and South Lima Yard, Ohio, 90.5 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by signal indications. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 71.54 miles west of Sandusky and 4,736 feet west of the west siding-switch at Mt. Cory, where the railroad is crossed at grade by U. S. Highway No. 25. The track at this point extends from northeast to southwest, and the highway extends practically east and west. Timetable directions on the railroad are east and west, and these directions are used in this report. The track is tangent throughout a distance of more than 10 miles immediately east of the crossing and a considerable distance westward. The grade is 0.30 percent descending westward at the crossing. U. S. Highway No. 25 intersects the railroad at an angle of 47°02'. This highway is 20 feet in width and is surfaced with bituminous material. It is tangent throughout a considerable distance immediately north of the crossing and curves slightly toward the east at the crossing. The highway is practically level in the vicinity of the crossing. The crossing is 37 feet 8 inches wide and is surfaced with timbers.

A circular railroad-crossing advance-warning sign 2 feet 6 inches in diameter is located to the right of the direction of south-bound highway traffic, 16 feet 5 inches west of the center-line of the highway and 435 feet north of the crossing. This sign is mounted on a mast 3 feet 4 inches above the level of the highway and bears two diagonal lines intersecting at right angles and the letters "RR" in black on a yellow background. A standard cross-buck railroad-crossing sign is located to the right of the direction of south-bound traffic, 21 feet west of the center-line of the highway and 15 feet north of the center-line of the track. This sign is mounted on a mast 11 feet 3 inches above the level of the highway and bears the words "RAILROAD CROSSING" in black on a white background. A horizontal bar is mounted on the same mast 7 feet 10 inches above the level of the highway. A hooded red light 8-3/4 inches in diameter is attached to each end of this bar. The warning aspect is displayed by the alternate illumination of the lights at the rate of 39 times per minute. A rectangular sign 22-1/2 inches high and 25-1/2 inches long is mounted on the mast 4 feet 9 inches above the level of the highway. This sign bears the

words "STOP ON RED SIGNAL." A similar railroad-crossing sign for warning the drivers of north-bound vehicles is located in the southeast angle of the intersection. The control circuits are so arranged that both signals automatically display warning aspects when a west-bound train is occupying any portion of the main track throughout a distance of 2,250 feet immediately east of the crossing. A crossing-whistle sign for west-bound trains is located 1,320 feet east of the crossing.

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

14. ENGINE \* \* \* WHISTLE SIGNALS.

Note:— The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "— " for longer sounds. \* \* \*

SOUND	INDICATION
* * *	
(1) — — o — — —	Approaching public crossings at grade, To be prolonged or repeated until crossing is reached.

\* \* \*

30. The engine bell must be rung \* \* \* while approaching and passing public crossings at grade \* \* \*

Section 3807-60 of the motor vehicle laws of Ohio reads in part as follows:

No person shall drive a vehicle across a railroad grade crossing when:

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

\* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 60 miles per hour.

### Description of Accident

No. 63, a west-bound third-class freight train, consisted of engine 720, a 2-8-4 type, 75 cars and a caboose. This train passed the west siding-switch at Mt. Cory at 12:12 p. m., according to the traingraph of the traffic-control machine, and while it was moving at a speed of 50 miles per hour it struck a motor-truck at a rail-highway grade crossing located 4,736 feet west of the west siding-switch at Mt. Cory.

The vehicle involved was a tractor and a semi-trailer. The tractor was owned by the driver, Charles T. Clingan, of Cleveland, Ohio. The owner, who was the sole occupant, held Ohio operator's license No. P49680. The tractor was a 1951 model 6-cylinder Ford and was equipped with an enclosed cab. It bore Ohio license No. 6-G-644. The semi-trailer was a 1950 model open box Gramm. It bore Missouri license No. 1-002. The total length of the tractor and the semi-trailer, coupled, was 40 feet. At the time of the accident both the tractor and the semi-trailer were leased to the Summit Fast Freight Company of Akron, Ohio. The cargo consisted of merchandise. This vehicle was moving southward on U. S. Highway No. 25 at a speed of between 35 and 50 miles per hour when it entered upon the crossing and was struck by No. 63.

The engine and tender and the first 27 cars of No. 63 were derailed. The engine stopped upright and approximately in line with the track. The front end was 630 feet west of the crossing. The tender stopped at the rear of the engine and approximately in line with the track. It leaned to the north at an angle of about 45 degrees. Both the engine and the tender were somewhat damaged. The derailed cars stopped in various positions on or near the track. Twelve of the derailed cars were destroyed, 14 were badly damaged, and 1 was slightly damaged.

The tractor was moved westward to the point at which the engine stopped. It was destroyed by fire. The semi-trailer stopped about 30 feet west of the highway and 10 feet north of the track. It was demolished.

The engineer, the fireman, and the front brakeman of No. 63 were injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 12:13 p. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement over the crossing was 15.85 trains. During the 24-hour period beginning at 12:01 a. m., June 22, 1952, 2,739 automobiles, 1,545 trucks, 20 buses, and 17 other vehicles passed over the crossing.

### Discussion

As No. 63 was approaching the crossing where the accident occurred the speed was 50 miles per hour, as indicated by the tape of the speed recording device. The enginemen and the front brakeman were maintaining a lookout ahead from their respective positions in the cab of the engine. The conductor and the flagman were in the caboose. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The engine bell was ringing. The engineer said that he began to sound the grade-crossing whistle signal when the engine was in the vicinity of the crossing-whistle sign. Several seconds later he observed the motor-truck moving southward on the highway. The motor-truck appeared to be approximately the same distance from the crossing as the train and to be moving at approximately the same speed as the train. The motor-truck continued to move toward the crossing without a reduction in speed, and the engineer sounded a series of short blasts on the whistle in an effort to attract the driver's attention. When the engineer became aware that the motor-truck would not stop short of the crossing he placed the brake valve in emergency position and closed the throttle. The collision occurred before the speed of the train was reduced. The fireman and the front brakeman could not see the motor-truck from their positions on the left side of the cab.

After the motor-truck reached a point 600 feet north of the crossing, the driver could have obtained a view of the approaching train at any point throughout a distance of 1,500 feet immediately east of the crossing. The driver was killed in the accident, and no information as to his familiarity with the crossing was obtained. Two witnesses to the accident who were in an automobile moving southward on the highway behind the motor-truck said they thought the motor-truck approached the crossing at a speed of about 35 miles per hour. They also said that the flashing-light warning signal on the railroad-crossing sign in the northwest angle of the intersection was not in operation as the train approached. Another witness to the accident who was approaching the crossing from the south said that the flashing-light warning signal on the sign in the southeast angle of the intersection was operating properly. This signal could not be seen from a vehicle approaching from the north. The sign in the northwest angle of the intersection was knocked down and the wires leading to the flashing-light

warning signal on this sign were broken during the collision. The warning signal on the sign in the southeast angle of the intersection was in operation after the accident occurred, and it continued to operate until the rear end of the train was removed. Inspection and tests of the undamaged portion of the signal equipment was begun by the signal maintenance foreman of the carrier about 2 hours 45 minutes after the accident occurred. No defective condition was found. The rear end of the train had not been removed when the inspection was begun, and the positions of the controlling relays at that time indicated that both flashing-light warning signals should have been in operation from the time No. 63 entered the approach circuit until the accident occurred.

Cause

It is found that 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 thirteenth day of August, 1952.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.