

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 3018  
MISSOURI AND ARKANSAS RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR HARRISON, ARK., ON  
AUGUST 23, 1946

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Missouri and Arkansas  
Date: August 23, 1946  
Location: Harrison, Ark.  
Kind of accident: Collision  
Equipment involved: Passenger train : Motor-truck  
Train number: 1 :  
Engine number: Motor-car 705 :  
Consist: Motor-car :  
Estimated speed: 35 m. p. h. : 30 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable and train orders  
Track: Single; 2° curve; 1.0 percent  
descending grade eastward  
Highway: Tangent; crosses track at angle  
of 56°25'; practically level  
Weather: Cloudy  
Time: 12:15 p. m.  
Casualties: 2 killed; 15 injured  
Cause: Failure to stop motor-truck  
short of train moving over  
a highway grade crossing

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 3018

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

MISSOURI AND ARKANSAS RAILWAY COMPANY

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October 21, 1946

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Accident near Harrison, Ark., on August 23, 1946, caused  
by failure to stop motor-truck short of train moving  
over a highway grade crossing.

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

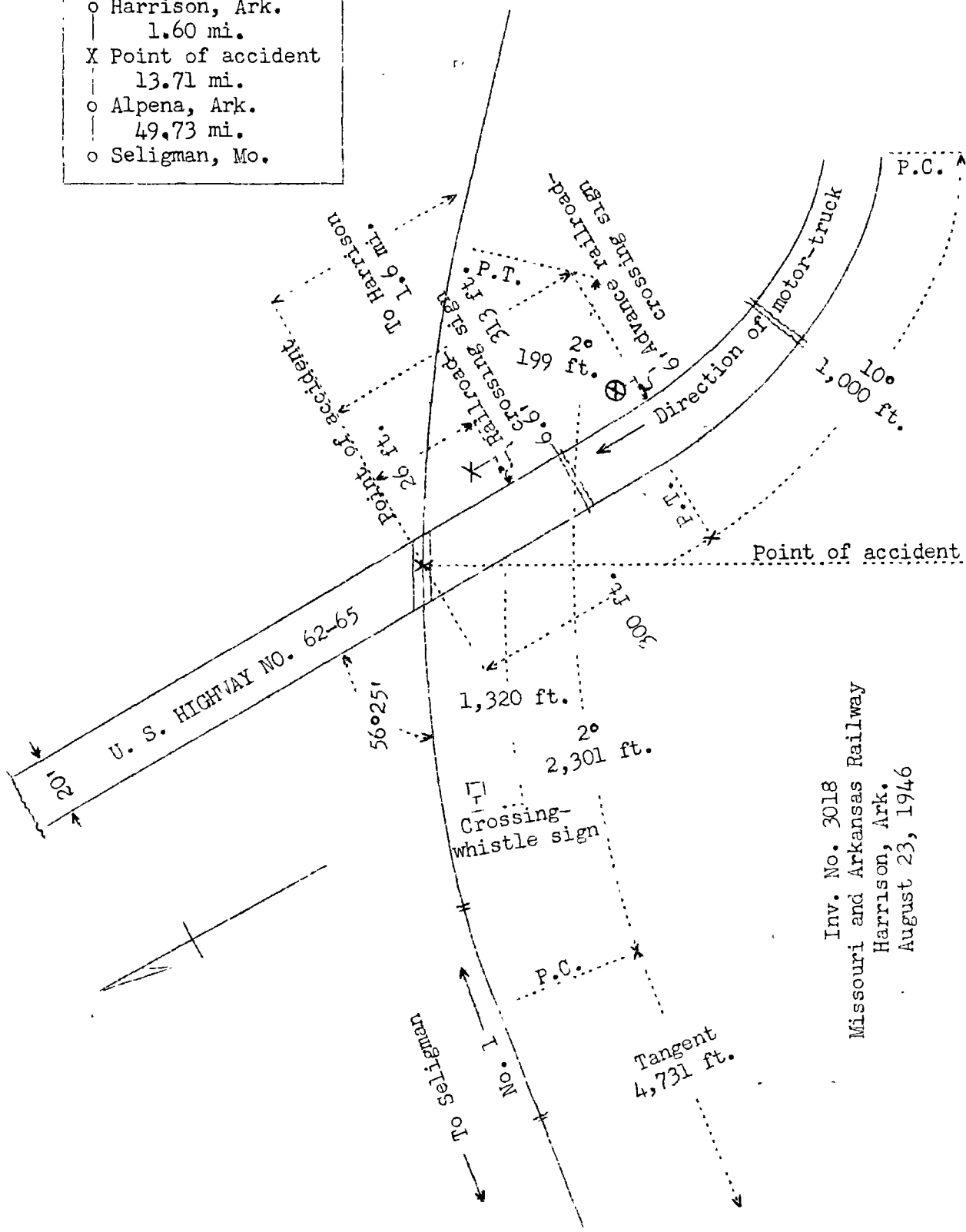
PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 23, 1946, there was a collision between a passenger train on the Missouri and Arkansas Railway and a motor-truck at a highway grade crossing near Harrison, Ark., which resulted in the death of the driver of the motor-truck and one train-service employee, and the injury of 12 passengers, 1 railway-mail clerk, 1 express clerk and 1 train-service 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 Patterson for consideration and disposition.

- o Harrison, Ark.  
1.60 mi.
- X Point of accident  
13.71 mi.
- o Alpena, Ark.  
49.73 mi.
- o Seligman, Mo.



Inv. No. 3018  
 Missouri and Arkansas Railway  
 Harrison, Ark.  
 August 23, 1946

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the First District extending between Seligman, Mo., and Harrison, Ark., 65.04 miles, a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred 63.44 miles east of Seligman and 1.6 miles west of the station at Harrison, where the railroad is crossed at grade by U. S. Highway No. 62-65. From the west on the railroad there is a tangent 4,731 feet in length, which is followed by a 2° curve to the right 2,301 feet to the point of accident and 199 feet eastward. The grade is 1.0 percent descending eastward.

The highway intersects the railroad at an angle of 56°25', and is surfaced with asphaltum to a width of 20 feet. From the south on the highway there is a 10° curve to the right approximately 1,000 feet in length, which is followed by a tangent 300 feet to the crossing and a considerable distance northward. The grade is practically level. The crossing is 20 feet wide, and is surfaced with asphaltum. Flangeways about 2-1/2 inches wide are provided.

An advance railroad-crossing sign is located 313 feet south of the crossing and 6 feet east of the highway. This sign is a disc 30 inches in diameter, mounted on a post and 3 feet 1 inch above the level of the highway. It bears two diagonal lines intersecting at right angles at its center, and bears the letters "R.R." in black and in colorless reflector buttons on a yellow background. A standard cross-buck railroad-crossing sign is located to the right of the direction of north-bound traffic, 26 feet south of the track and 6.6 feet east of the highway. This sign is mounted on a mast 6 feet above the level of the highway, and bears the words "RAILROAD CROSSING" in black and in colorless reflector buttons on a white background. A crossing-whistle sign for east-bound trains is located 1,320 feet west of the crossing.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

14. Engine and Motor 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 \* \* \*

\* \* \*

Timetable special rules read in part as follows:

5. \* \* \* In approaching road \* \* \* crossing \* \* \* the whistle signal will be sounded at the crossing whistle board and the second whistle will be sounded and timed so that the engine \* \* \* will be over the crossing when the last blast ends. \* \* \*

The engine bell shall be rung at the whistling post, \* \* \* and shall be kept ringing until the engine \* \* \* shall have crossed such public road \* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for the train involved was 35 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

No. 1, a first-class passenger train, moving southward according to time-table direction but eastward according to compass direction, consisted of motor-car 705. The motor-car is operated from a control compartment at the front end. This train departed from Alpena, the last open office, 13.71 miles west of the point of accident, at 11:41 a. m.; 37 minutes late, and, while moving over a highway grade crossing 1.6 miles west of Harrison at an estimated speed of 35 miles per hour, it was struck by a north-bound motor-truck.

The motor-truck involved was a tractor and semi-trailer, owned and operated by the Carnation Milk Co., of Mount Vernon, Mo. The driver, who was the sole occupant, held Missouri chauffeur's license No. 7519. The tractor was a 1945 Mack LFT-ID-2441, 6-cylinder model, and bore Missouri license No. 26132. It weighed 8,000 pounds, and was equipped with dual tires on the rear wheels, air brakes on all wheels, and an enclosed steel cab. The semi-trailer was a 1945 Heil 2-45 model, and bore Missouri license No. 12037. It had dual tires on its wheels, and was provided with air brakes. The semi-trailer was equipped with a steel tank. The weight of the trailer when empty was approximately 4,000 pounds. The overall length of the tractor and semi-trailer was 28 feet.

At the time of the accident the cargo consisted of 24,000 pounds of milk. This vehicle was moving northward on U. S. Highway No. 62-65 at an estimated speed of 30 miles per hour when it struck No. 1.

The motor-truck struck the right side of motor-car 705 at the control compartment. The motor-car was derailed to the left and stopped practically upright, on the roadbed and 18 feet north of the track, with the front end 70 feet east of the crossing. The right side of the control compartment was crushed inward about 4 feet, and the motor-car was otherwise considerably damaged. The tractor and the semi-trailer were badly damaged.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 12:15 p. m.

The engineer was killed, and the conductor was injured.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement over the crossing was 5.6 trains. During the 24-hour period beginning at 7 p. m., August 27, 1946, 1,704 automobiles, 645 trucks and 14 busses passed over the crossing.

According to data furnished by the railroad, motor-car 705, built in 1933, is of steel, plate, girder, post and sill construction, having aluminum roof, hood, side and end sheets. It is 75 feet 7 inches in length, weighs 66,000 pounds, and consists of a control compartment, a baggage compartment, a mail compartment and a passenger compartment. The car is powered by a 200 horsepower gasoline motor, mounted beneath the floor at the rear of the front truck. The car is provided with schedule SWE single-end brake equipment having a safety-control feature.

#### Discussion

No. 1 was approaching the crossing at a speed of about 35 miles per hour in territory where the maximum authorized speed was 35 miles per hour. The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly en route. The crew consisted of a conductor, a motorman and a brakeman. The motorman was in the control compartment at the front end of the car, and he was killed in the accident. The conductor and the brakeman were in the passenger compartment, and the first they knew of anything being wrong was when the collision occurred. Several persons in the vicinity of the crossing heard the motor-whistle signal sounded for the crossing.

The investigation disclosed that the driver of the motor-truck was an experienced driver and had made several trips over the route prior to the accident. The driver of an automobile following the motor-truck said that the speed of the motor-truck was about 30 miles per hour as it approached the crossing, and the speed was not reduced prior to the collision. Visibility was not impaired by weather conditions, and the driver of the motor-truck could have seen the approaching train throughout a considerable distance immediately south of the crossing. The laws of the state of Arkansas require certain motor vehicles to stop short of railroad grade crossings, but the one involved in the accident is not covered in this requirement.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to stop motor-truck short of a train moving over a highway grade crossing.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-first day of October, 1946.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.