

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

REPORT NO. 3334

THE PITTSBURG & SHAWMUT RAILROAD COMPANY

IN RE ACCIDENT

NEAR TIMBLIN, PA., ON

JUNE 29, 1950

SUMMARY

Date: June 29, 1950

Railroad: Pittsburg & Shawmut

Location: Timblin, Pa.

Kind of accident: Collision

Equipment involved: Engine : Motor-truck

Engine number: 575 :

Estimated speeds: 12 m. p. h. : 10 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders

Track: Single; tangent; 0.63 percent descending grade southward

Highway: Tangent; crosses track at angle of 90°; 6.5 percent ascending grade westward

Weather: Clear

Time: 1:55 p. m.

Casualties: 1 killed; 1 injured

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

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO. 3334

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

THE PITTSBURG & SHAWMUT RAILROAD COMPANY

July 26, 1950

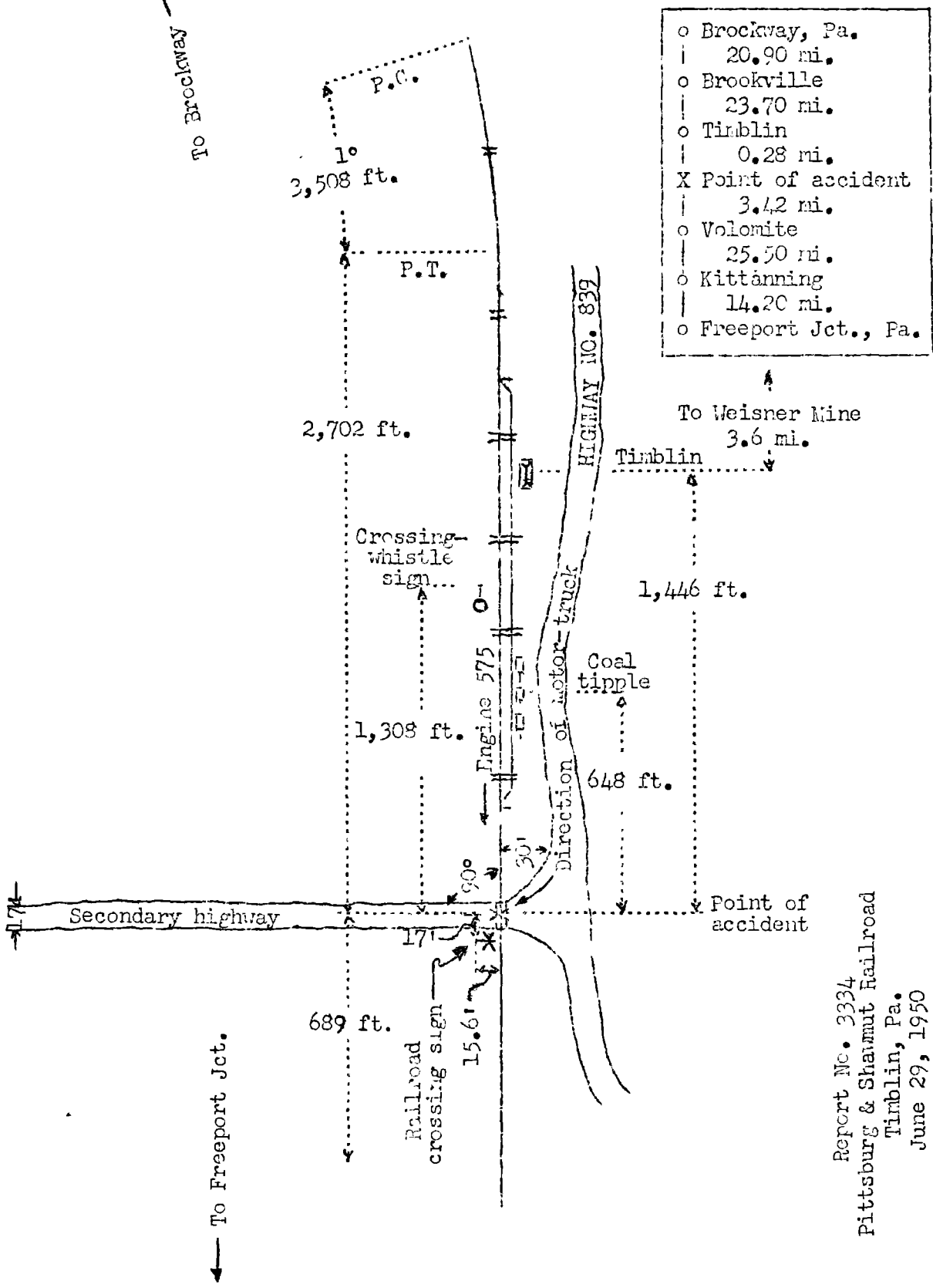
Accident near Timblin, Pa., on June 29, 1950, caused by a motor-truck occupying a rail-highway grade-crossing immediately in front of an approaching engine.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION¹

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On June 29, 1950, there was a collision between an engine on the Pittsburg & Shawmut Railroad and a motor-truck at a rail-highway grade-crossing near Timblin, Pa., which resulted in the death of one employee, and the injury of one employee.

¹ 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 | Brockway, Pa. | 20.90 mi. |
| o | Brookville | 23.70 mi. |
| o | Timblin | 0.28 mi. |
| X | Point of accident | 3.42 mi. |
| o | Volomite | 25.50 mi. |
| o | Kittanning | 14.20 mi. |
| o | Freeport Jct., Pa. | |

Report No. 3334
 Pittsburg & Shawmut Railroad
 Timblin, Pa.
 June 29, 1950

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This railroad extends between Brockway and Freeport Jct., Pa., 88 miles, and is a single-track line, over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 44.88 miles south of Brockway and 1,446 feet south of the station at Timblin, where the railroad is crossed at grade by a secondary highway. From the north on the railroad there is a 1° curve to the right 3,508 feet in length, and then a tangent extending 2,702 feet to the point of accident and 689 feet southward. The grade is 0.63 percent descending southward. Throughout a distance of about 1,400 feet immediately north of the point of accident, Pennsylvania State Highway No. 839 parallels the railroad on the east. In the vicinity of the point of accident, the west edge of the highway is about 30 feet east of the center-line of the track. The secondary highway on which the accident occurred extends westward from Highway No. 839 and intersects the track at an angle of 90°. This highway is about 100 feet in width at the junction with Highway No. 839 and narrows to a width of 17 feet at the intersection with the track. A vehicle moving south on Highway No. 839 and turning west on the secondary highway approaches the crossing at an angle of about 45° to the track. Highway No. 839 and the portion of the secondary highway east of the crossing are surfaced with bituminous material. A timber is laid near the gage side of each rail throughout the width of the crossing. The area of the crossing between the timbers is surfaced with dirt and cinders. West of the crossing, the highway is unimproved. The grade on the highway is about 6.5 percent ascending from the junction with Highway No. 839 to the crossing.

A standard cross-buck railroad-crossing sign is located in the southwest angle of the intersection, 15 feet 6 inches west of the center-line of the track and 17 feet south of the center-line of the highway. This sign is mounted on a mast, 12 feet above the level of the tops of the rails, and bears the words "DANGER STOP! RAILROAD CROSSING" in black letters on a white background. The mast bears the words "LOOK LISTEN". A crossing-whistle sign for south-bound trains is located 1,308 feet north of the crossing.

This carrier's 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, to be prolonged or repeated until crossing is reached * * *.

* * *

30. The engine bell must be rung when an engine is * * * approaching and passing public crossings at grade * * *.

The maximum authorized speed for engines in backward motion was 20 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Engine 575, headed northward and without cars, departed south-bound from the station at Timblin at 1:52 p. m. While moving at an estimated speed of 12 miles per hour it struck a motor-truck on a rail-highway grade-crossing 1,443 feet south of the station.

The motor-truck involved was a 1948 Chevrolet owned by the R. D. T. Coal Company. It bore Pennsylvania license number V24C9. The driver, who was the sole occupant, held Pennsylvania driver's license number 1702703. At the time of the accident the truck was empty. It had a rated capacity of 2 tons, and was equipped with a dump body and an enclosed cab. The front of the body, which was 7 feet 10 inches in width, extended over the top of the cab. This truck was moving westward at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour when it entered the crossing and was struck by engine 575.

Engine 575 was not derailed, and it stopped with the south end about 186 feet south of the center-line of the highway. The rear end of the tender was slightly damaged.

The truck stopped in an upright position, in the southwest angle of the intersection, about 5 feet west of the center-line of the track and 17 feet south of the center-line of the highway. It was slightly damaged.

The front brakeman was killed, and the conductor was injured.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred at 1:55 p. m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement over the crossing was 7.6 trains. During the 24-hour period beginning at 8 a. m., July 5, 1950, 159 automobiles, 25 trucks, and 4 tractors passed over the crossing.

Engine 575 was equipped with divided foot boards at the front and the rear. It was not equipped with a pilot.

Discussion

On the day of the accident the crew of Extra 575 North, a north-bound freight train, was instructed to move loaded cars from various points between Kittanning and Brookville, located, respectively, 29.2 miles south and 23.7 miles north of Timblin. At Volomite, 3.7 miles south of Timblin, the rear portion of the train was left on the main track while the engine moved 25 cars from that point to Weisner Mine, 3.6 miles north of Timblin. The conductor and two brakemen accompanied the engine, and the flagman remained with the rear portion of the train. When the accident occurred, the engine, headed northward and without cars, was returning from Weisner Mine to Volomite. During this movement the enginemen were in their respective positions in the cab of the engine, the swing brakeman was seated on top of the cistern of the tender, and the conductor and the front brakeman were riding on the foot board on the engineer's side of the south end of the tender. The brakes of the engine had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route. The engineer sounded the grade-crossing engine-whistle signal when the engine was in the vicinity of the crossing-whistle sign and completed the last blast as the engine reached the crossing. The engine bell was ringing during this time. The engineer said that as the engine passed a coal tipple located between Highway No. 839 and the track at a point 648 feet north of the crossing, he observed a motor-truck leave the ramp of the tipple and proceed southward on the highway. At this time the engine was moving at a speed of about 12 miles per hour and the motor-truck was moving slightly faster than the engine. When the motor-truck reached the junction of Highway No. 839 and the secondary highway, it turned to the right and entered the

crossing immediately in front of the approaching engine. When the engineer became aware that the truck was turning toward the crossing, he initiated an emergency brake application. The collision occurred a few seconds later. No member of the crew except the engineer observed the motor-truck before it entered the crossing.

The driver of the motor-truck was engaged in hauling coal from a mine to the coal tipple, a distance of about one-half mile. He had unloaded the truck at the coal tipple and was returning to the mine when the accident occurred. He said that the speed of the truck did not exceed 20 miles per hour between the coal tipple and the crossing, and was about 10 miles per hour as the truck entered the crossing. The windows of the cab were open, but the driver said he did not hear the sound of the bell or the whistle of the engine. He did not look toward the north before the truck entered the crossing, and was not aware that the engine was approaching until immediately before the collision occurred. He had been driving a truck in this vicinity for several years and was thoroughly familiar with the crossing.

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 engine.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-sixth day of July, 1950.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,
Secretary.