

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2611  
THE VAFASH RAILROAD COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR TRUESDALE, MO., ON  
AUGUST 4, 1942

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Wabash  
Date: August 4, 1942  
Location: Truesdale, Mo.  
Kind of accident: Train struck track laborers  
Train involved: Passenger  
Train number: First 2  
Engine number: 691  
Consist: 8 cars  
Speed: 67 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable, train orders and  
automatic block-signal system  
Track: Single; 1° left curve; 1.24  
percent descending grade eastward  
Weather: Cloudy  
Time: 1:17 p. m.  
Casualties: 10 killed  
Cause: Accident caused by failure to  
provide proper protection for  
track laborers

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2611

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

THE WABASH RAILROAD COMPANY

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September 18, 1942.

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Accident near Truesdale, Mo., on August 4, 1942, caused by  
failure to provide proper protection for track  
laborers.

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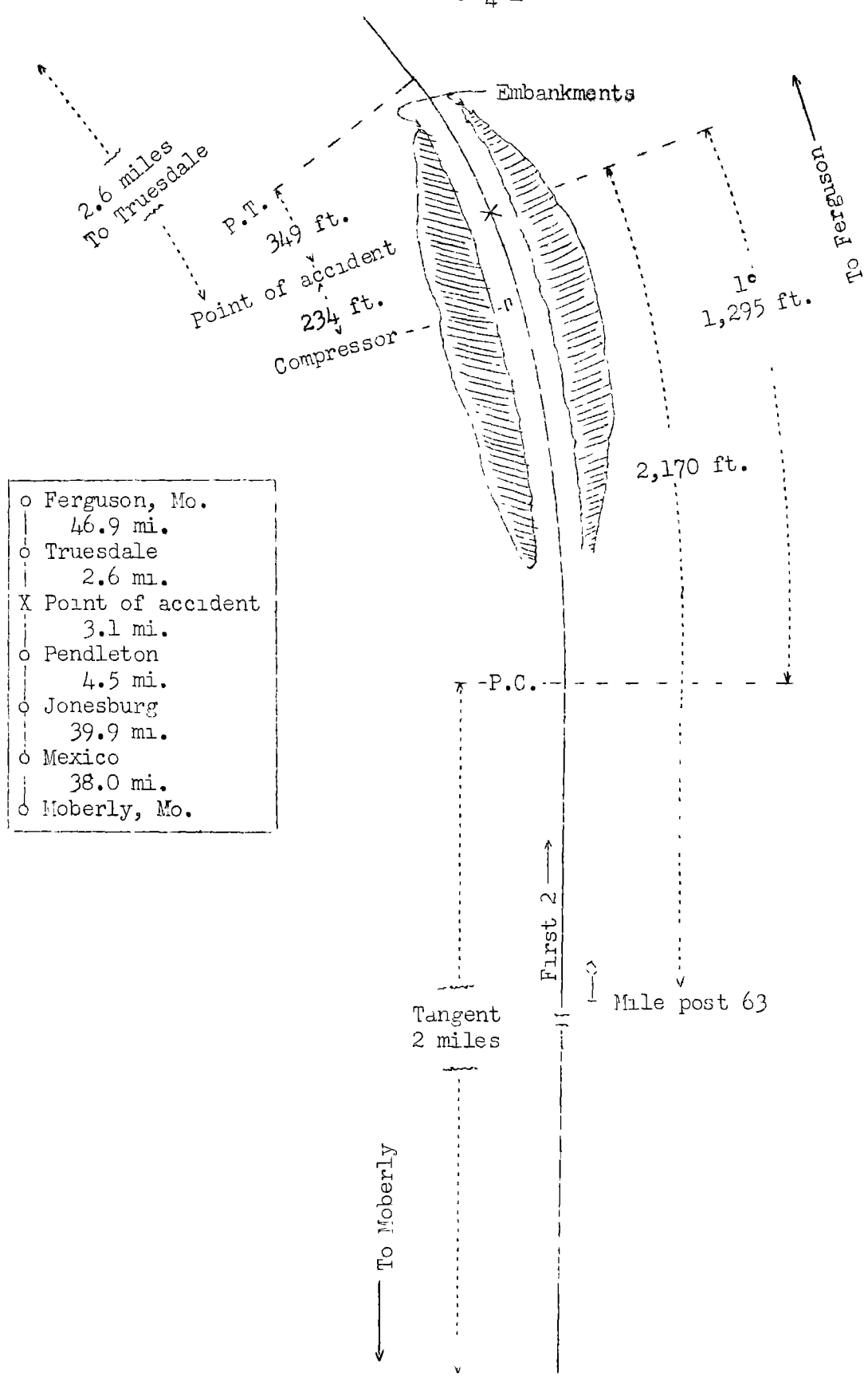
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On August 4, 1942, a passenger train on the Wabash  
Railroad struck men working on the track near Truesdale,  
Mo. This accident resulted in the death of 10 men.

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<sup>1</sup>Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Com-  
merce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the  
Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and  
disposition.



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|---|-------------------|----------|
| o | Ferguson, Mo.     | 46.9 mi. |
| o | Truesdale         | 2.6 mi.  |
| X | Point of accident | 3.1 mi.  |
| o | Pendleton         | 4.5 mi.  |
| o | Jonesburg         | 39.9 mi. |
| o | Mexico            | 38.0 mi. |
| o | Moberly, Mo.      |          |

Inv-2611  
 Wabash Railroad  
 Truesdale, Mo.  
 August 4, 1914

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Moberly Division designated as the 14th District and extending between Moberly and Ferguson, Mo., a distance of 135 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders and an automatic block-signal system. The accident occurred at a point 2.6 miles west of the station at Truesdale. As the point of accident is approached from the west there is a tangent 2 miles in length, which is followed by a 1° curve to the left extending 1,295 feet to the point of accident and 349 feet beyond. At the point of accident the grade for east-bound trains is 1.24 percent descending.

In the vicinity of the point of accident the track is laid in a cut, the embankments of which are 1,250 feet in length and rise to a maximum height of 25 feet. The accident occurred at a point about 975 feet east of the west end of this cut.

At the time of the accident 10 members of an extra gang of 16 men were operating pneumatic tools in tamping ballast on the curve involved. A gasoline-engine-driven air-compressor, which furnished power for the tamping tools, was located on the north side of the track at a point 234 feet west of the point of accident.

In the vicinity of the point of accident the maximum authorized speed for passenger trains is 75 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

First 2, an east-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 691, one baggage car, one baggage-mail car, two coaches, one dining car, one Pullman sleeping car, one tourist car and one Pullman sleeping car, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. This train passed Jonesburg, 10.2 miles west of Truesdale and the last open office, at 1:11 p. m., 39 minutes late, and while moving at a speed of 67 miles per hour, as indicated by the tape of the speed-recorder with which the engine was equipped, it struck 10 members of the track crew. The brakes of First 2 functioned properly en route. There was no condition of the engine that obscured the vision or distracted the attention of the enginemen.

From an east-bound engine, the view of the point where the accident occurred is restricted to a distance of about 250 feet, because of track curvature and the cut.

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred about 1:17 p. m.

The employees killed were the foreman and nine laborers of the extra gang involved.

Discussion

First 2 was moving in a cut on a 1-degree curve to the left at a speed of 67 miles per hour in territory where the maximum authorized speed was 75 miles per hour when it struck and fatally injured 10 members of an extra gang of 16 men who were working on the track. No. 2 was due to leave Pendleton, 3.1 miles west of the point where the accident occurred, at 12:35 p. m., and Truesdale, 2.6 miles east of the point of accident, at 12:45 p. m. No train order restricting the movement of First 2 on the curve involved had been issued. No warning signal restricting the speed of First 2 was placed in the vicinity of the point of accident and no flag protection was provided by the track laborers. The enginemen were maintaining a lookout ahead. The fireman first saw the men and called a warning to the engineer, but the accident occurred before action could be taken to stop the train. The view had by the engineer of the point where the accident occurred was restricted to a distance of about 250 feet, because of track curvature and the cut.

According to the statements of the 6 surviving members of the extra gang, the 10 employees who were killed were tamping ballast with pneumatic tamping tools and were working in the center of the track at a point 234 feet east of the location of the air-compressor. The exhaust of the air-compressor engine and the noise made by the tamping tools prevented the men from hearing the approaching train. It had been the practice to assign one member of the crew to act as a lookout to warn the men of approaching trains. Just prior to the time the accident occurred the foreman had assigned other duties to the member of the crew who had been on lookout duty and did not assign any other employee to this duty. The track supervisor said that the foreman of the crew had been instructed to provide proper protection for his men while they were operating tamping tools. Why he failed to provide protection could not be determined, as he was killed in the accident. If protection had been provided for the crew involved, this accident could have been averted.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by failure to provide proper protection for track laborers.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this eighteenth day of September, 1942.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,

Secretary.