

## INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF SAFETY IN RE  
INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON  
THE ATLANTIC COAST LINE RAILROAD AT TRILBY, FLA.,  
ON DECEMBER 1, 1925.

January 29, 1926.

To the Commission:

On December 1, 1925, there was a side collision between two light engines on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad at Trilby, Fla., which resulted in the death of a boy who was acting as a hostler's helper; he was not in the employ of the company.

#### Location and method of operation

This accident occurred within the yard limits of Trilby, which is the point at which the branch line of the Jacksonville District and the Main line of the Gainesville District connect with the main line of the Lakeland District, all of these being single-track lines. The main line of the Lakeland District is tangent track in the vicinity of the point of accident; approaching from the north the Gainesville District main line leads off to the right while the Jacksonville District branch line leads off to the left, the respective switches being located approximately 700 and 600 feet north of the station. The tracks of the three districts then parallel each other for a short distance, those of the Gainesville and Lakeland Districts being connected by a crossover located a short distance south of the switches previously mentioned. The south crossover switch is located on the Lakeland District line and is a trailing-point switch for southbound movements on that track.

It was raining at the time of the accident, which occurred at about 12.40 a.m.

#### Description

About an hour prior to the accident yard engine 368, headed south, was backed in on the crossover at the south switch, stopping with its tender clear of the north crossover switch in order to allow two northbound passenger trains from the Gainesville District to pass, the head end of the engine at this time fouled the Lakeland District track. After these two trains had passed, the engine was

backed in on the crossover a little farther so as to have the head end into clear for the purpose of allowing a Lakeland District freight train to pass. This movement of engine 368 caused its tender to foul the Gainesville District main line, at the northern end of the crossover, the switch, however, was not opened, being left as last used by the Gainesville District passenger trains. The engine had been standing at this point about 25 minutes when the right rear corner of the tender was struck by the right rear corner of the tender of engine 915, which was backing southward on the Gainesville District main line.

Road engine 915, headed north, had been standing on the Jacksonville District main line, at a point about opposite the crossover. After the Lakeland District freight train had passed, this engine headed out on that track and then was moved northward far enough to clear the switch leading to the Gainesville District, after which the switch was opened and the engine was backed in on that track. A stop was made until the two switches were closed, and the engine then was backed southward on the Gainesville District main line, moving at a low rate of speed, until the rear of the tender cornered the rear of the tender of engine 368, which was fouling the north crossover switch.

Engine 915 was brought to a stop with the rear of its tender about opposite the cab of engine 368; the right rear corner of each tender was considerably damaged. The boy who was killed was riding on the right rear tender sill step of engine 915.

#### Summary of evidence

Hostler Irwin, of road engine 915, stated that on the night of the accident his regular helper did not report for duty on time; about 15 minutes later a boy, William Touchton, about 17 years of age, came to the engine with the regular helper's lantern and keys, and told Hostler Irwin that he would act in the capacity of helper until the regular helper arrived, which the hostler agreed to, stating that he had permitted this boy to work under similar arrangements on two previous occasions. Hostler Irwin stated that after backing across to the Gainesville District main line he brought the engine to a stop and the boy closed the two switches, then walked down toward the crossover switch at which the accident occurred, and that he followed him with the engine, backing up at a low rate of speed, just enough to be moving. Hostler Irwin said that when the boy reached a point near the rear of yard engine 368 he gave a back-up signal and Hostler Irwin therefore assumed that the boy had definitely ascertained that the yard engine was standing

into clear on the crossover, and consequently he continued backing up the road engine at a low rate of speed. Although Hostler Irwin said the side window on the engineman's side of the cab was open and that he was sitting on the arm rest, with his feet on the seat box and the upper part of his body out of the window, with his hand on the brake valve, yet he said he did not see the boy get on the engine or give any stop signals just prior to the accident, saying that the glare from the headlight on the rear end of yard engine 368 affected his vision to such an extent that he could not see anything, and the first he knew of anything wrong was when the accident occurred. Hostler Irwin further stated that his engine had only had a red light on the rear end, that he had no knowledge of the operating rules, had never been instructed in them, and had never been furnished with a book of rules or timetable. He admitted, however, that he was aware an engine should not use the main track within yard limits unless the track is seen or known to be clear, but in this instance he assumed that the boy had definitely ascertained the way was clear before giving the back-up signal.

Switchman Bradshaw, of yard engine 368, said he was in the immediate vicinity and that after closing both switches the boy got on the right rear tender sill step and then gave a back-up signal. As the road engine was passing him, Switchman Bradshaw boarded the steps on the right side of the gangway in order to ride to where his own engine was standing on the crossover, and at this time he observed that Hostler Irwin had the side cab window closed and was standing up in the cab, with one knee on the seat box, looking out through the small window in the rear of the cab. He said the boy gave a stop signal with his lighted hand lantern when the tenders of the two engines were about 14 feet apart and surmising that the yard engine was not into clear Switchman Bradshaw said he shouted to Hostler Irwin and then climbed up in the gangway to avoid being struck, the accident occurring immediately afterwards, at which time he estimated the speed of the road engine to have been about 10 miles an hour. At the time he climbed up in the gangway he again noticed the position of Hostler Irwin and that the cab windows were closed. Switchman Bradshaw further stated that the headlight on the rear of the standing yard engine was burning brightly, but that it did not interfere with or affect his vision, and was of the opinion that had Hostler Irwin opened the side cab window and kept a proper lookout he could have seen the stop signals given by the boy in time to have averted the accident. He also stated that he had not been furnished with a copy of the book of rules or a time-table, nor had he received any instructions on the rules.

None of the other employees of yard engine 368 was aware of anything wrong until the accident occurred. Engineman Everett and Fireman Thomas stated that they were in the cab of their engine but had not noticed the movements of engine 915 prior to the collision. Afterwards they noticed that the cab window on the engineman's side of engine 915 was closed. Foreman Cooper and Switchman Harbison were in the yard office when the accident occurred. Neither Fireman Thomas nor Switchman Harbison had been furnished with a time-table or book of rules, nor had they received instructions on the rules.

#### Conclusions

This accident was caused by the failure of Hostler Irwin, of engine 915, to be operating his engine within yard limits prepared to stop unless the main track was seen or known to be clear.

Had Hostler Irwin been maintaining a proper lookout and governed himself accordingly when the boy acting in the capacity of hostler's helper gave the stop signal with his lighted hand lantern just prior to the accident the collision probably would have been averted.

The investigation developed the existence of a practice on the Lakeland District of employing men in various capacities without properly instructing them concerning the rules under which they are working and without furnishing them either with a copy of the book of operating rules or with a time-table. The proper officials should take immediate action to remedy such conditions, it is only fair to state, however, that the present superintendent had only been in charge for a few days prior to the date of the accident.

None of the employees involved had been on duty in violation of any of the provisions of the hours of service law.

Respectfully submitted,

W. P. Borland,

Director.