

November 21, 1912.

In re Investigation of accident on the Baltimore
& Ohio Southwestern Railroad at West Athens, Ohio, Oct. 2,
1912.

On October 2, 1912, there was a head end collision on the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern Railroad at West Athens, Ohio, between a freight train and a switching engine, resulting in the death of one employee and the injury to two passengers.

After investigation, I beg to submit the following report:

This accident occurred on the main track within yard limits at West Athens. At this point the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern Railroad is a single track line. The grade is practically level. From the point where the accident occurred the track is straight for a distance of 1650 feet to the east and 3230 feet to the west.

Eastbound freight train No. 72 was hauled by two engines, No. 2622 and No. 2571, and was in charge of Conductor Conrad and Enginemen Green and Dean. This train left Chillicothe, Ohio, at 7:00 p. m., three hours late, and at the time of the accident was two hours and twenty-five minutes overdue at West Athens. At Lubrig, a station about four miles west of the point where the accident occurred, all the cars in train 72 were set out and the engines were turned on a bye, as there were no

facilities for turning engines at Athens. The train then consisted of engine No. 2501, engine No. 2622 and a caboose; it started to back up from Lubrig to Athens, and collided with switching engine 1576 at about 10:25 p. m., approximately 330 feet west of the west switch to West Athens yard. There was a dense fog at the time of the accident, and the engineer on train No. 72 had no warning that the main track was occupied until within about one car length of engine 1576 when the light from a red fusee was seen.

Engine No. 1576 was in charge of Conductor Donnell and Engineman Harbour. The crew in charge of this train went on duty at 4:30 p. m., and was engaged in switching service at adjacent mines and in the yards at Athens and West Athens. Shortly before this accident engine 1576 started from Athens with 20 loads of coal and proceeded toward the west end of West Athens yard over the passing track. On account of the switch leading from the passing track to track No. 1 at West Athens being out of service, this engine pulled out on the main line and was going to the west end of the yard and back in from there. Before leaving Athens, Conductor Donnell, in the presence of Engineman Harbour, warned Brakeman Moore to look out for train No. 72.

Fireman Hertenstein stated that as engine No. 1576 approached the switch leading to the main line Brakeman Moore ran ahead and threw the switch and the train

passed over it without stopping. Brakeman Moore got a fusee from the engine, and when eight or ten car lengths west of the switch at the west end of the yard he lighted the fusee and stuck it into the pilot beam. He stated the engine then passed Brakeman Moore; the last time he saw brakeman Moore he was back two or three car lengths from the engine, apparently looking for a signal from the rear. He thought the collision occurred two or three minutes after brakeman Moore stuck the fusee in the pilot beam. Engineman Barbour was killed in the collision.

Brakeman Moore stated that he rode on the pilot until within a short distance of the main line switch and then went ahead and threw the switch. He had some difficulty in operating the switch lock and the engine approached just as he threw the switch. He stated that the engine was moving too fast to permit him to go ahead and flag. When the engine had passed out on the main track he got a red fusee from the cab. Then he ran ahead of the engine to flag. He stated that after passing the switch where they were to back in he jumped on the pilot step, lighted the fusee and stuck it into the pilot beam. He stated that he was attempting to get into the engine cab when the collision occurred.

At the time of the accident there was a fog so dense that lights could be seen only a very short distance. The fireman of the leading engine of No. 72 stated that he

saw the light from the fuses when only about one car length away from it and Engineman Dean stated that he could see just a little reflection of light from the fuses in the fog before the collision. Both trains were running at low speed at the time of the accident.

This accident was caused by the crew of engine No. 1576 allowing their train to be on the main track on the time of train No. 72 without proper flagging protection, in violation of rule 97 of the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern Railway Company. Engineman Harbour and Brakeman Moore were primarily responsible for this violation.

All the employees involved in this accident were experienced men with good records, and none of them was working contrary to the provisions of the hours of service law. .