

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF AN ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON THE  
CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO & ST. LOUIS RAILWAY AT  
ANSONIA, OHIO, ON DECEMBER 28, 1920.

March 12, 1921.

On December 28, 1920, there was a derailment of a passenger train on the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway at Ansonia, Ohio, which resulted in the death of 1 employee, and the injury of 49 passengers, 2 employees on duty, and 1 employee off duty. This accident was investigated in conjunction with representatives of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Ohio, and as a result of this investigation the Chief of the Bureau of Safety reports as follows:

Location.

This accident occurred on the Cleveland-Indianapolis Division, which in the vicinity of the point of accident is a double-track line over which trains are operated by time-table, train orders, and a manual block-signal system. Approaching the point of accident from the west the track is tangent for several miles, the grade is slightly descending. The track is laid with 90-pound rails, 33 feet in length, with 20 or 21 ties to the rail, single-spiked, and ballasted with gravel, about 8 inches in depth, no tie plates are used. The accident occurred at the west switch of the eastward passing track. At the time of the accident the eastbound main track was blocked by a damaged freight car, making it necessary for eastbound trains to use the eastward passing track, the switches being lined and locked for such a movement. At the time of the accident the

weather was clear.

Description.

The train involved was eastbound passenger train No. 16, operating between Indianapolis, Ind., and Cleveland, O., and was in charge of Conductor O'Connor and Engineman Ruster. It consisted of 1 combination baggage car and coach, 1 coach, 1 cafe coach, and 1 Pullman parlor car, and was hauled by engine 6414. The cars were of all-steel construction with the exception of the cafe coach, which was of steel-underframe construction. At Union City the crew in charge received several train orders, among which was train order No. 130, form 31, reading as follows.

"Eastward siding Ansonia will be used as main track and switches are open at both ends of siding."

This order was made complete at 5.35 p.m. and the train left Union City, which was the last open office, at 5.49 p.m., 34 minutes late, and was derailed at the west switch of the eastward passing track, about 1.1 miles west of the passenger station at Ansonia, while running at a speed estimated to have been about 50 miles per hour.

Engine 6414, together with the tender, turned entirely around, and came to rest on its right side, with its head end toward the west. All of the cars were derailed to the right except the rear truck of the rear car, which was not derailed; the coach turned over on its right side. The employee killed was the engineman.

Summary of evidence.

When Conductor O'Connor delivered the orders to

Engineman Ruster at Union City, he called particular attention to the order relative to the use of the eastward passing track at Ansonia and asked the engineman if he knew which was the eastward passing track, to which the engineman replied saying it was the passing track east of the tower. Conductor O'Connor said he then told the engineman he was wrong, that the passing track east of the tower was the westward passing track and that the eastward passing track was west of the tower, the switch being west of the coal chute. Before leaving Union City the engineman gave him the orders, and after he had read them he handed them back to the engineman, who then read them and asked the fireman if that was the way he understood them, to which the fireman said he replied in the affirmative. After leaving Union City, Fireman Winegardner was on the deck of the engine, and also in the tender shoveling down coal, until the train approached Ansonia. Thinking that the train was nearing the switch where it would enter the passing track, Fireman Winegardner got on his seat box and this time saw that the engine had nearly reached the switch. He said that just as he turned to call to the engineman the latter shut off steam and applied the air brakes in emergency; at the time the brakes were applied the engine was about to enter the switch. After the accident Conductor O'Connor, together with Brakeman Chase, also of train No. 16, saw that the switch was set for the passing track, with the lamp burning, displaying red to the west.

Shortly before the accident occurred eastbound freight train second No. 92 had arrived at Ansonia, closed the switch leading to the eastward passing track, and had pulled ahead on the main track for the purpose of allowing train No. 16 to use the passing track. After the rear end was clear of the switch it was again opened and locked in that position, while the markers on the caboose were turned to display green indications to the rear. Brakeman McCormick and Marshall, of train second No. 92, said they were standing just west of the switch when train No. 16 approached. When it was within a short distance of them they realized that it was travelling at a high rate of speed and each of them said he gave stop signals to the engineman, and Brakeman McCormick added that it was at about this time he heard the air brakes applied and saw fire flying from the wheels.

About 55 feet west of the switch leading to the eastward passing track is the trailing switch of a crossover which connects the two main tracks; the switch lamp at the eastward switch of this crossover is about 10 feet above the switch ties, while the switch lamp on the switch leading to the eastward passing track is 13 feet 6 inches above the switch ties, both of these switch stands are located on the south side of the eastbound main track. The statements of the members of the crews of trains Nos. 16 and second No. 92 indicated that the switch lamps of both of these switches were burning brightly as were the markers of train second No. 92 and also the headlight of the engine hauling train No. 16, Fireman Winegardner had not noticed the switch lamps

but did notice the markers of train second No. 92 burning brightly. It also appeared that Engineman Ruster had sounded the proper whistle signals at various road crossings en route from Union City to the point of accident.

The eastward passing track as it existed at the time of this accident was designated as such by a bulletin order issued under date of December 16, 1919. There was no doubt in the minds of any of the members of the crew of train second No. 92 as to what switch was meant in the orders held by them, neither was there any doubt in the minds of the conductor and fireman of train No. 16 as to the location of this switch. Brakeman Chase, however, when Conductor O'Connor first showed him the order on leaving Union City, did not know the exact location of the eastward passing track but when the conductor told him he was wrong he recalled its correct location

#### Conclusions

This accident was caused by the failure of Engineman Ruster, of train No. 16, properly to control the speed of his train approaching the west switch of the eastward passing track.

The evidence indicates that when he first received the order providing for the use of the eastward passing track as a main track, Engineman Ruster did not remember its exact location and that the conductor had reminded him of it. The switch lamp of the switch at which the accident occurred was displaying a stop indication, however, while the switch lamps

of the crossover switches and also the markers on the rear of train second No. 92 were burning properly. On account of the straight track and clear weather conditions prevailing, all of these various signals should have been visible a considerable distance and should have been ample warning to Engineman Ruster that he was approaching the west switch of the passing track. Even had he again forgotten the exact location of the passing track having been reminded by the conductor, Engineman Ruster would then have been under the necessity of obeying the indication displayed by the switch lamp at the west switch, which was showing red to the west.

Engineman Ruster was employed as a fireman in 1883 and promoted to engine man in 1892. At the time of the accident the crew of train No. 16 had been on duty less than 4 hours, previous to which they had been off duty 30 hours or more.