

**In Re. Investigation of an Accident which Occurred
on the Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus
Railway near Pumping Station, Ohio, on
January 27, 1917.**

March 7, 1917.

On January 27, 1917, there was a head-end collision between a passenger motor-car and a freight motor-car on the Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway near Pumping Station, Ohio, which resulted in the death of 3 passengers and 1 employee, and injury to 44 passengers and 1 employee. After investigation of this accident the Chief of the Division of Safety reports as follows:

The Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway is a single-track electric road. The accident occurred on a subdivision of the Southern Division extending between West Park, Ohio, and Seville, Ohio, a distance of 40 miles. No block signal system is in use on this road, train movements being governed by time-table and train orders. Train orders are issued by a dispatcher by means of the telephone. Under the rules, motorman and conductors are required to report for orders at designated telephone booths, where by further orders they are advanced successive steps to report at the next desired point. In the absence of orders providing a meeting point, extra trains are required to clear the time of superior trains five minutes, and regular trains may not proceed beyond the meeting point named in the time-table, without an order. There is no rule establishing superiority by direction.

Leaving Pumping Station, southbound, there is an 8-degree curve to the right 522 feet long, followed by a tangent 522 feet long; then there follows a 9-degree 30-minute curve to the left which skirts the apex of an orchard. This curve is 450 feet long and is followed by several miles of straight track. The accident occurred at about the middle of the last mentioned curve. The view of motorman leaving Pumping Station, southbound, is obstructed on the first curve by a dense wood on the right; then as they reach the short tangent between the two curves their view is obscured by the orchard on the left, limiting the view across the curve. The track at the point of accident is practically level. The weather at the time was clear.

Southbound motor-car No. 140, which was a combination passenger and smoking car of wooden construction, with steel underframe, was in charge of Conductor Pease and Motorman Kenery. This car departed from Cleveland, Ohio, en route to Wooster, Ohio, at 12.15 p. m., it reached West Park, Ohio,

at 1.01 p. m., where the crew received orders to run as the second section of train No. 35 to Berea. This train left Berea as No. 35 at 1.39 p. m., six minutes late, the crew having received an order concerning its meeting point with train No. 406, but at no time did they receive any order concerning extra 407, with which it collided a short distance south of Pumping Station. At the time of the collision train No. 35 was about 9 minutes behind its schedule, and was traveling at a speed variously estimated to have been from 18 to 25 miles an hour.

Northbound motor-car No. 407, a single-end baggage car used for package freight service, was in charge of Conductor Crittle and Motorman Lawrence. This car left Wooster at 1.00 p. m. with an order to run extra from Wooster to West Park. After leaving Wooster the crew received no order concerning train No. 35, but received the usual orders to report at certain named telephone booths. Extra 407 made its last stop prior to the collision at Brunswick sub-station, and inasmuch as train No. 35 was due at that station at 1.43 p. m. the extra should have waited there, but the crew neglected to consult the time-table, and proceeded, colliding with train No. 35 about two miles further north at about 1.52 p. m., just prior to which its speed was from 20 to 30 miles an hour.

The impact of the collision demolished the front end of train No. 35, imprisoning the motorman in the debris and killing 3 passengers, after which the wreckage took fire from an overturned stove in the front end of the baggage car and entirely consumed all that was inflammable of both cars. Motorman Kemery was incinerated with the debris.

Conductor Fense, of train No. 35, stated that his car was running about 20 miles an hour, when suddenly he felt the current reversed, and within five seconds the cars came together. He stated that the accident occurred at about 1.52 p. m.

Motorman Lawrence, of extra 407, stated that after leaving Medina, a station several miles south of Pumping Station, he reminded the conductor that they were to meet train No. 35 before reaching Berea. He said that they stopped at Brunswick sub-station, where Motorman Lance, who was deadheading on his car, either put off a letter or received one. His car passed Newton switch at about 1.45 p. m., and shortly afterwards he looked at his watch, finding it to be 1.47 p. m. At that time Motorman Lance was standing at his right and Conductor Crittle at his left, and the conductor suddenly exclaimed, "My God--thirty-five!" to which he replied, "Here he comes!" He immediately applied the air brakes, grabbed for the whistle and stepped back just before the collision occurred. Motorman Lawrence further stated that the accident

was due to Conductor Crittle and himself overlooking train No. 35. He said that his brakes were in good holding condition, but the limited distance in which he had to stop made it impossible to avoid the collision.

Conductor Crittle stated that before leaving Wooster they received orders to run extra to West Park and to report at Seville. His train left Seville at 1.01 p. m., after receiving an order to report at Medina. At Medina they received orders to meet extra 55 at Miners and to report at Berea, no order concerning train No. 35 being received at any place. The last stop prior to the accident was at Brunswick sub-station, and the conductor stated that after leaving that station he was riding in the front vestibule and that the car was running at a speed of from 20 to 30 miles an hour when he suddenly remembered that they had not met train No. 35, and exclaimed, "Where is thirty-five?" He said that it did not seem to him that he had any more than said this when train No. 35 appeared in sight, and he heard the motorman apply the brakes and sound the whistle, the accident occurring immediately thereafter. Conductor Crittle further stated that no one was to blame for this accident but Motorman Lawrence and himself, although Motorman Lance's presence may possibly have had some effect upon their forgetting train No. 35.

Superintendent Tatum stated that the men involved in this accident had all passed satisfactory examinations on the rules and were considered competent and efficient employees.

Rule 161 of the Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway, which pertains to extra trains clearing the time of regular trains, reads in part as follows:

"All extra trains must keep out of the way of regular trains and clear their time at least five minutes, unless they have been given a meeting or passing order, or other order relieving them from this necessity."

This accident was caused by extra 407 occupying the main track on the time of train No. 35, a superior train, in violation of Rule 161, for which Conductor Crittle and Motorman Lawrence are responsible. Both of these employees admitted that they overlooked train No. 35.

Motorman Lawrence entered the service of this railway in June, 1908, and Conductor Crittle in September, 1909. While both of these men are considered competent employees, the records show that during the past three years the conductor has failed three times and the motorman once properly to register their train.

At the time of the accident Conductor Crittle and Motorman Lawrence had been on duty 8 hours and 52 minutes after a period off duty of 18 hours and 45 minutes.