

**In re Investigation of an accident which
occurred on the Cleveland, Southwestern
& Columbus Railway, near Winters,
Ohio, January 29, 1917.**

March 31, 1917.

On January 29, 1917, there was a head-end collision between two motor cars on the Cleveland, Southwestern & Columbus Railway, near Winters, Ohio, which resulted in the death of one employee and the injury of four employees. After investigation of this accident the Chief of the Division of Safety reports as follows:

The subdivision on which this accident occurred is a single track line extending from Seville, Ohio, to Wooster, Ohio, a distance of 16.8 miles. No block signal system is in use, train movements being handled by time-table and train orders transmitted to conductors and motormen by telephone; no operators are employed. All scheduled trains of the same class have equal rights to scheduled meeting points, and no trains have precedence by direction. Extra trains must clear regular trains at least five minutes.

Approaching the point of accident from the south there are about 2,500 feet of descending, 1% grade, followed by about 1,500 feet of ascending, 1% grade, this ascending grade continuing to a point about 300 feet beyond the point of accident. The track is straight for 4,000 feet south of the point of accident, and for about 2,000 feet north thereof. At the time of the collision there was a dense fog.

Line Repair Car 23 was in charge of Motorman Smith, no conductor accompanying him. After doing some work between Seville and Medina, which is 10.2 miles north of Seville on another subdivision, an order was received at Medina to run extra Medina to Wooster, and to report at Seville en route. The trip was made from Medina to Seville, at which latter point the car reached the subdivision on which the accident occurred. According to the train sheet, car 23 arrived at Seville at 10.14 a. m. and departed at about 10.19 a. m., after having received an order reading: "No orders." On account of there being no operators at the various points, there was no record of the time of passing the different stations, but the evidence indicates that it was about 11.55 a. m. when car 23 collided with northbound train 1st No. 310 at a point 4,450 feet north of Winters, which is 2.3 miles north of Wooster and 14.5 miles south of Seville.

Northbound train 1st No. 310 consisted of motor passenger car 113, in charge of Conductor Boone and Motorman Gauweiler. Orders were received at Wooster for car 113 to run as the first section of train No. 310, Wooster to Seville, no passengers being carried. The order was completed at 11.40 a. m., and the train left at 11.42 a. m., 8 minutes before train No. 310 is scheduled to depart. Train No. 310 is scheduled to leave Winters at 12.00 noon, but inasmuch as the collision occurred at a point 4,450 feet north of Winters at 11.53 a. m., it is apparent that train 1st No. 310 passed Winters at about 11.51 a. m., or 9 minutes ahead of schedule time; in fact, according to the statement of the conductor, it was 7 minutes ahead of time at this point.

Both cars were badly damaged by the collision and were destroyed by fire which broke out in the wreckage. The motorman of train 1st No. 310 was killed in the accident.

Dispatcher Clapp stated that the crew of train 1st No. 310 received their orders at 11.40 a. m., but he did not know at what time the train left Wooster. Although there was an agent at Wooster he was not required to make a report of the time trains left there, and he stated that he did not ask him for any such report. The last he heard of car 23 was when the crew called him at 11.42 a. m. from Landis, 2.3 miles north of Winters, where they were inspecting the telephone. He judged that the accident occurred at about 11.53 a. m., taking this time from the time the substation employee reported that the south breaker was out.

Motorman Smith, of car 23, stated that his watch was 30 seconds slow when he asked the dispatcher to give him the time at Chippewa, which is on the subdivision where the car had been working earlier in the day. About a minute before the collision occurred he looked at his watch, and it was 11.51 a. m., and about three minutes after the collision occurred he again looked at it, and it was 11.56 a. m., and he therefore judged that the collision occurred at about 11.53 a. m. He stated that he intended running his car against train No. 310 as far as Wingers, at which point he would have headed in on the siding and cleared train No. 310 at least five minutes, as required by the rules, train No. 310 not being due to leave that point until 12.00, noon. Motorman Smith also stated that about 1,000 feet from the point of accident he sounded a road crossing signal, but that he had no warning of the approach of train 1st No. 310 until he saw it about 400 feet distant. He then applied the brakes in emergency and reversed the power, and thought he had reduced the speed of his car from 20 or 25 miles an hour to about 5 miles an hour before the collision occurred. He also stated that he had never received orders, when running as a first section, to run ahead of schedule time in order to keep out of the way of the following section.

Lineman Williams stated that at the time of the accident he was in the forward end of car 23, within a few feet of the motorman, and the motorman had told him that he intended going to Winters for train No. 310. He said he thought he could only see about 300 feet on account of the fog, and that the speed of his car was from 20 to 25 miles an hour when he first saw train 1st No. 310 approaching, at which time the motorman at once reversed the power and applied the brakes. He stated that he had looked at his watch just previously, and it was 11.51 a. m., and he thought the collision occurred at about 11.52 a. m. He said he had previously compared his watch with that of the motorman and there was only a few seconds variation between them. He did not know whether or not it was a practice for the first section of a train to run ahead of schedule in order to keep out of the way of the following section.

Lineman Baker stated that he was riding in the forward end of the car and that the first he knew of the approach of train 1st No. 310 was when Lineman Williams called attention to it, and on looking up he saw it about 200 or 300 feet away. He did not think the speed of his own car was more than 15 miles an hour, and said that the motorman at once reversed the power and applied the brakes. After the accident he assisted Conductor Boone, of train 1st No. 310, and then he and Lineman Williams looked at their watches, and it was 11.55 a. m.; he thought this was about two or three minutes after the accident occurred.

W. A. Bates, in charge of the Madison Substation, located 4.1 miles north of Winters, stated that at 11.53 a. m. the breakers were knocked out, and this indicated that the power had been reversed on some car, as that action on the part of the motorman throws out the breakers.

Section Foreman Kaufman stated that at the time of the collision he was about 600 feet distant. He saw train 1st No. 310 when it passed him, but did not notice the time, but said that he had looked at his watch when he heard the train whistle as it approached, and it was then 11.50 a. m. He did not have any idea as to how fast the train was running, but did not think it was over 15 miles an hour. He also said that he did not know how near his watch was to being correct, but a few days afterwards he compared it with the dispatcher and it was then 35 seconds fast.

Conductor Boone, of train 1st No. 310, stated that he reported to the dispatcher at 11.40 a. m., and received an order to run as train 1st No. 310 from Wooster to Seville. His train left Wooster at about 11.42 a. m., although the scheduled leaving time of train No. 310 is 11.50 a. m. At the time his train started he was getting the time on the order, the motorman starting without him, and he had to run

in order to board the car. His train did not carry any passengers and made no stops. He stated that it passed Winters at about 11.53 a. m., or 7 minutes ahead of schedule time. He thought about two or three minutes elapsed between the time of passing Winters and the time the collision occurred. Approaching the point of collision he was standing in the door, looking ahead. The weather was very foggy, his vision being limited to about 150 feet, and he said that he did not see car 23 until within 50 feet of it. Conductor Boone further stated that since he had been working out of Wooster it had been customary for the first section of regular trains to depart and get over the hill ahead of the regular train, on account of the power being weak at that point. He said he had never received a train order wherein it was specified that the first section should run ahead of time, and he did not recall any instance where any of the officials had been on his car when it was being operated ahead of time. He said the custom of leaving Wooster ahead of time had resulted from the desire to get over the hill as far as possible before the following section left Wooster, and that by the time Greston, which is 13.9 miles from Wooster, was reached, they would be back on their regular time. He did not know whether or not the officials knew of the practice, but said it was the dispatchers' way of handling the trains, and that if they left Wooster on time and then lost time they were reprimanded because they did not depart earlier, and he claimed that he had been so reprimanded by the dispatcher. He could not, however, give the name of the dispatcher who had reprimanded him. He said that when spoken to by dispatchers about leaving ahead of time at other points he had called their attention to rule No. 163, which provides that trains shall not leave stations ahead of scheduled leaving time, and he claimed that he had been told: "If you don't want to get over the road, stay there." One of these occasions was when he was on a run when his train was due to meet trains 45 and 409 at Fenne, one of them being due at 6.02 p. m. and the other at 6.11 p. m., while his own train would be due to leave at 6.11 p. m. On arriving at Fenne he called the dispatcher to see where the trains were, and was given an order to proceed to the next switch, this order reading: "Meet 45 and 409 at Miners instead of Fenne, and take siding." The two stations named are 2.4 miles apart. It was 6.02 p. m. when he called the dispatcher, and if he had left immediately upon completion of this order he would have left Fenne nine minutes ahead of scheduled time. The dispatcher who issued this order, and who at that time told him to stay there if he did not want to get over the road, was Dispatcher Garvey.

Dispatcher Garvey stated that trains were not required to report when leaving stations and the only time he would have on his train sheet would be the time of leaving certain terminals, and the time there shown would be the time they were ready to leave and might not be the exact time of

departure. He said he had never issued instructions to the first section of a regular train to run ahead of schedule, and never received any report of trains being so operated; neither did he have any knowledge of such practice. He had no recollection of ever having told Conductor Boone to leave ahead of time when running as a first section of a regular train, in order that the second section might be operated on time, and he denied having insisted that he leave a station, after orders had been issued, sufficiently ahead of time to allow the second section to run on time. He also said that his recollection was that trains 45 and 400 were late, at the time he issued the order at Yemassee, referred to by Conductor Boone. He stated that the power was weak near Wooster when two cars were using it, but that he had never hurried a first section out ahead of time.

Dispatcher O'Leary stated that he would not have thought of having the first section of a regular train leave a station ahead of time and said that if he ever knew of it being done he would stop the section being so operated and call the attention of the crew to the fact that they were running ahead of time. It was difficult, however, to know the time trains left stations, as the only way he would learn of it would be when he would call a substation to find out for his own information of a certain train had passed, or in case he talked over the telephone with some member of the crew.

This accident was caused by train 1st No. 510 being operated several minutes ahead of scheduled time, for which Conductor Boone and Motorman Gausewiler are responsible. The motorman was killed in the collision, but according to the conductor's statements his train passed Winters seven minutes ahead of time, while according to the statements of other employees this train was nine minutes ahead of time. Conductor Boone claimed, however, that the operation of the first section of a train ahead of time, leaving Wooster, was a common practice, in order that the second section might not be delayed on account of two cars using the current over Wooster hill at the same time, but nothing could be produced to substantiate his statement as to the existence of such a practice.

Conductor Boone had been in the service of this railway as a conductor for over eight years, previous to which he had had four months' experience as a fireman on a steam road. In September, 1913, he was suspended on account of running from 1,000 to 1,500 feet beyond a meeting point. Between October, 1914, and March, 1915, he had on five different occasions registered his train by the wrong number, and also on one occasion used abbreviations in a train order. In April, 1915, he failed to register his train at a registering point, and on November 29 he was suspended for 15 days for failing to report to the dispatcher at a certain point, as directed by a train order. In April, 1915, he was suspended for 5

days for using one leg of a wye in violation of a written order, resulting in derailment.

Motorman Gauweiler was employed in March, 1909. In September, 1914, and again in November, he registered his train by the wrong number, while during the week ending November 10, of the same year, his train was not registered out of a terminal on three different days, resulting in his being called into the office and reprimanded, and given one day's suspension.

Both of the employees responsible for this accident had been on duty less than one hour, previous to which they had had over 10 hours off duty.