Inv-2063

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

BUREAU OF SAFETY

ACCIDENT ON THE

CINCINNATI & LAKE ERIE RAILROAD

URBANA, OHIO

APRIL 28, 1936.

INVESTIGATION NO. 2063

SUMMARY

Railroad:	Cincinnati & Lake Erie	
Date:	April 28, 1936	
Location:	Urbana, Ohio	
Kind of accident:	Head-end collision	
Trains involved:	Passenger	: Passenger
Train numbers:	306	: 303
Consist:	motor car 116	: motor car 305
Speed:	20 m.p.h.	: undetermined
Track:	Tangent and practically level	
Weather:	Cloudy	
Time:	Between 9:23 and 9:25 a.m.	
Casualties:	2 killed and 14 injured	
Cause:	Operator ran past time table meeting point	

To the Commission:

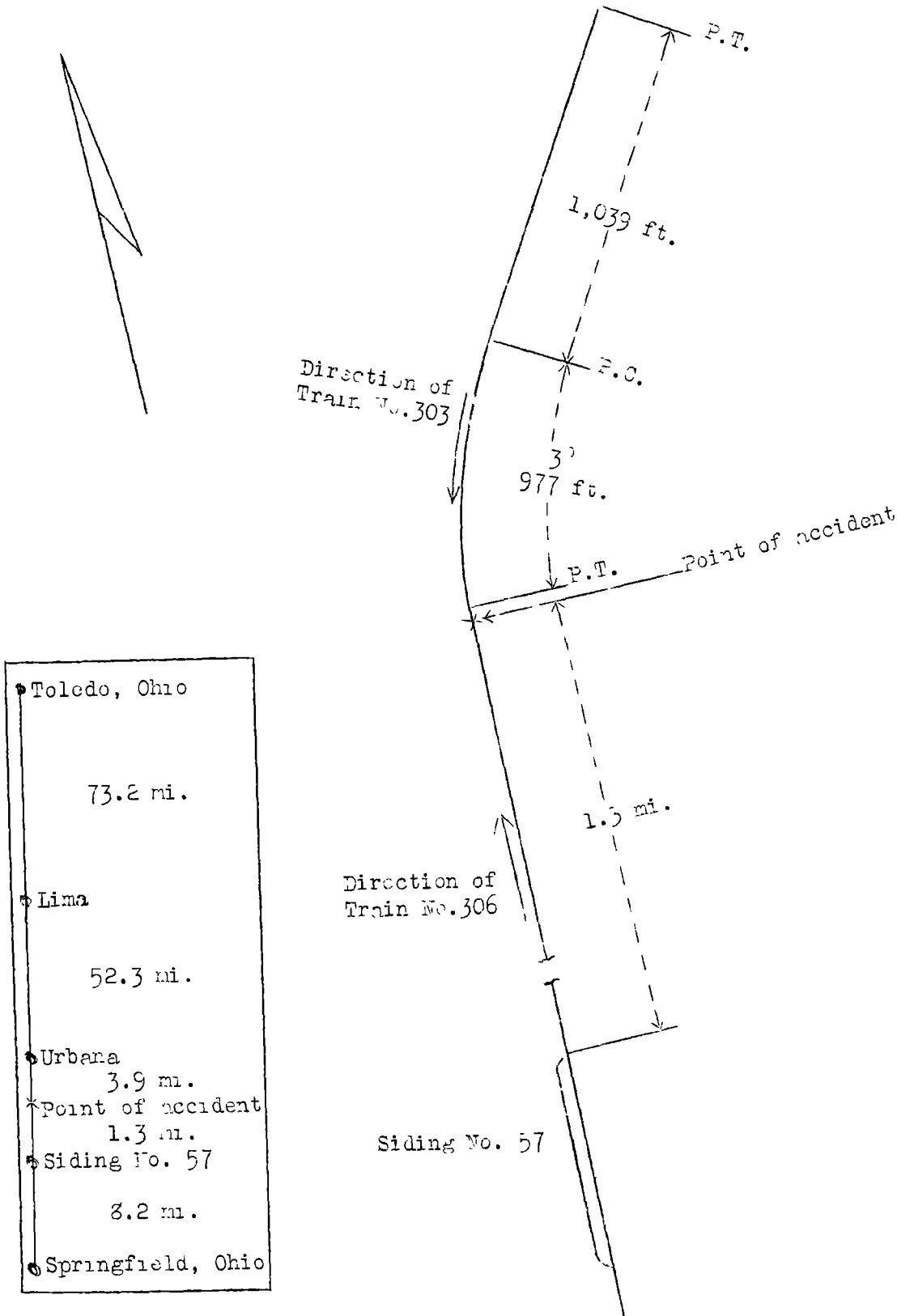
On April 28, 1936, there was a head-end collision between two passenger trains on the Cincinnati & Lake Erie Railroad near Urbana, Ohio, which resulted in the death of 1 passenger and 1 employee and the injury of 11 passengers and 3 employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with a representative of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Ohio.

Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on the Toledo Division, extending between Toledo and Springfield, Ohio, a distance of 138.9 miles; in the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track electric line over which trains are operated by time table and train orders, no block-signal system being in use; there is no superiority by direction between trains of the same class, such trains being required to meet at schedule meeting points unless otherwise authorized by special order. A siding, known as Siding No. 57, parallels the track on the west, and the accident occurred at a point 1.3 miles north of this siding, or 3.9 miles south of the station at Urbana. Approaching the point of accident from the south the track is tangent for approximately 2 miles, the accident occurring at the leaving end of this tangent; approaching from the north the track is tangent for a distance of 1,039 feet, than a 3° curve to the left 977 feet in length, followed by the tangent on which the accident occurred. The grade for north-bound trains is generally ascending, varying from 0.27 to 1.2 percent for a distance of 3,600 feet to within 300 feet of the point of accident; it is then practically level. Approaching from the north the grade is 3.42 percent descending for a distance of 1,800 feet; the grade then decreases gradually for a distance of 500 feet and merges into a vertical curve 200 feet in length, and is then slightly ascending for 1,200 feet to the point of accident.

Special instructions contained in the time table provide that south-bound trains will take siding for north-bound trains, except at single end sidings pointing south, then north-bound trains will take siding.

Due to a hill on the east side of the track and the variation in grade, the view of opposing trains is limited to approximately 500 feet.



Inv. No. 2063
Cincinnati & Lake Erie R.R.
Urbana, Ohio
April 23, 1936

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred between 9:23 and 9.25 a.m.

Description

Train No. 306, a north-bound passenger train, consisted of motor car 116, of all steel construction, and was in charge of Operator Patterson. After the operator received a verbal clearance from the dispatcher, this train departed from Springfield, 13.4 miles from Urbana, at 9:05 a. m., according to the train sheet, on time. The train stopped to pick up a passenger at stop 95, about a mile south of Siding No. 57, passed Siding No. 57, the scheduled meeting point with Train No. 303, and collided with Train No. 303 at a point 1.3 miles beyond while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 20 miles per hour.

Train No. 303, a south-bound passenger train, consisted of motor car 305, of all steel construction, and was in charge of Operator Boegel. This train departed from Lima, 52.3 miles from Urbana, at 7:50 a. m., according to the train sheet, on time, after the operator received a clearance card from the dispatcher at that point. This train then met Train No. 304, in charge of Operator Linkhart at the end of double track at Lima, where each operator transferred to the opposing train and Operator Boegel delivered the clearance card received at Lima to Operator Linkhart, who then proceeded in charge of Train No. 303. This train departed from Urbana at 9:17 a.m., according to the train sheet, 2 minutes late, and was approaching Siding No. 57 at a low rate of speed when it collided with Train No. 306.

The front end of each car was crushed in for a distance of about 6 feet; one pair of wheels of car 116 was derailed. The employee killed was the operator of Train No. 306 and the employees injured were the operator of Train No. 303 and a division line foreman riding on that train, and a traveling auditor who was riding on Train No. 306.

Summary of evidence

Operator Linkhart, of Train No. 303, stated that on descending the hill approaching the point of accident he reduced speed to approximately 20 or 25 miles per hour and on rounding the curve he saw the roof of a car ahead which at first he thought might be a freight train running ahead of him, but at second glance he saw that the car was approaching his train. He immediately shut off power, applied the brakes in emergency, reversed the gear and called to the

passengers to go to the rear; he then entered the car and had gotten back about 5 or 6 rows of seats when the collision occurred. He thought the opposing car was between 800 and 900 feet away when he first saw it, but he was unable to estimate the speed of either train at the time of tne accident, although his own train was traveling slowly. Operator Linkhart stated that with the exception of two occasions, he has met this train regularly at Siding No. 57, since the effective date of the current time table, March 8, 1936.

Line Superintendent Mitman, who was on Train No. 303, stated that he saw the approaching train about the same time as the operator, at which time the speed of their train was between 30 and 35 miles per hour, although the speed was further reduced at the time of the collision.

Traveling Auditor Donahue, who was on Train No. 306, stated that a passenger boarded the car about 2 minutes before the occurrence of the accident and he did not think that the train had attained a speed of more than 25 miles per hour when he saw the opposing train about one-half square distant. He thought the speed had been reduced to 20 miles per hour at the time of the accident.

Mrs. Alberta Stanhope, a passenger on Train No. 306, stated that she boarded the car at Springfield and rides on this train about three or four times a week. An aged man boarded the train at stop 95 and she heard him talking about his fare; she noticed that the motorman did not reply, and the passenger then sat down in a seat behind the operator. On passing Siding No. 57 she wondered why the operator did not stop as this train usually arrives at the siding first and the operator opens the switch for the other car. On looking up she saw the opposing car directly ahead.

Miss Betty Goddard, a passenger on Train No. 306, stated that she had been riding on this train regularly for about a month and she noticed nothing unusual about Operator Patterson that morning. She thought that the fare transaction was completed with the passenger who boarded the train at stop 95, before the occurrence of the accident. She also stated that sometimes the train in which she was riding would take siding, and at other times the opposing train would enter the siding.

Mr. Samuel E. Martin, a passenger on Train No. 306, made a statement at the coroner's inquest to the effect that when the passenger boarded the train at stop 95, it was necessary for the operator to look up the price of the fare and while the operator did this, the passenger sat down in the front

seat behind the operator. He then gave the money to the operator who rang up the fare and gave the passenger his ticket. It was not very long after that when the accident occurred. Mr. Martin was sitting in the front seat on the right side and saw the opposing car when it was about 200 feet distant and he saw the operator shut off the motor.

Train Dispatcher Mason, located at Lima, stated that when Operator Patterson reported to him at 9:04 a. m. on the day of the accident the operator appeared to be in normal condition. He had always found that Operator Patterson followed instructions given to him and that he had made meets in accordance with time table or train order instructions.

Ticket Agent Moul and Porter Gwynn also stated that Operator Patterson was in normal condition when they talked to him on the morning of the accident.

General Superintendent Curtiss stated that operators are instructed to transact no business while train is in motion other than consulting time tables and train orders. Bulletins are issued covering the method of fare collection, and each operator is personally instructed by a representative of the company as to the correct procedure to follow, and is also given a through examination on rules and such instructions at intervals of approximately 6 months.

Discussion

Operator Patterson was killed as a result of the accident and the reason for his failure to stop at Siding No. 57, the scheduled meeting point with Train No. 303, could not be determined. The evidence indicates, however, that when a passenger boarded the train at Stop 95, approximately 1 mile south of siding 57, it was necessary for the operator to consult his tariff for the rate of fare and while doing this he continued the operation of the car, and this diversion may account for the fact that he either did not realize that he had passed Siding No. 57, or that he overlooked the meet with Train No.303.

The operators of both trains involved in this accident were experienced men over this division and each had been regularly assigned to the trains involved since the effective date of the current time table, March 8, 1936.

Conclusion

This accident was caused by Train No. 306 running past its time-table meeting point with Train No. 303.

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. PATTERSON,
Director.