

File No. 39

March 27, 1912.

IN RE INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENT ON THE LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE RAILROAD, JANUARY 16, 1912.

On January 16, 1912, there was a head end collision on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, about twenty-one miles east of Louisville, Ky., between Louisville & Nashville passenger train No. 15 and the second section of Chesapeake & Ohio train No. 92, resulting in the death of the engineman and firemen of both trains and the injury of the conductor and brakeman of the C. & O. train and twenty passengers on the L. & N. train.

This accident was reported by telegraph by the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company on January 17, and after investigation the Chief Inspector of Safety Appliances reports as follows:

Chesapeake & Ohio trains are operated over the Louisville & Nashville Railroad between Louisville and Lexington, Ky., a distance of 64 miles. This is a single track line, operated by the double train order system, the block signal system not being used.

This accident was caused by failure of the crew of Chesapeake & Ohio train No. second 92 to keep their train clear of Louisville & Nashville train No. 15, a superior train both by class and by direction.

On the date of the accident, Louisville & Nashville passenger train No. 15, consisting of engine No. 368, one baggage car and three coaches, with Conductor Wilder and Engineman McMorney in charge, left Lexington for Louisville at 3:00 p. m., and passed Shelbyville, Ky., at 5:02 p. m., four minutes late. Shelbyville is the last telegraph station east of the point where the accident occurred.

The second section of Chesapeake & Ohio train No. 92, with Conductor Anderson and Engineman O'Lee in charge, was a second-class train, consisting of engine No. 128, one combination car and one coach, which was being deadheaded to Lexington, Ky., running on a freight schedule and carrying no passengers. This train left Louisville at 4:35 p. m., and arrived at "MN" tower 1.5 miles east of Louisville, at 4:40 p. m., being there diverted to the main line of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad; it departed at 4:48 p. m., and arrived at "EK" tower, 12.7 miles east of Louisville, the junction point of the Lexington Division, at 5:39 p. m. At this tower Conductor Anderson and Engineman O'Lee signed for train orders (none of which affected train No. 15) and were informed by the train dispatcher that No. 15 was on time. Second No. 92 departed at 5:12 p. m., passed three stations where

(2)

the train could have taken siding to allow No. 15 to pass, and at 5:25 p. m., about one and one-quarter miles east of Long Run, Ky., collided with train No. 15.

The collision occurred on the three-degree curve, 2,300 feet long, and half a mile from the bottom of a one per cent grade three miles long. On the greater part of this curve the track is in a side-hill cut. The view of the L. & N. engine crew was limited to about 500 feet, while the view of the C. & O. engine crew was limited to approximately 200 feet. At the time of the accident, the weather was cloudy and cold. It was estimated that the speed of the trains at the time of the collision was approximately 45 miles per hour.

All C. & O. enginemen and trainmen employed on this line between Louisville and Lexington are required to pass an examination on the time card and operating rules of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, and while operating trains on this line are subject to the rules of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company. Conductor Anderson had had twelve years' experience in train service, and Engineman O'Lee had had nine years' experience. During the sixty days prior to the accident, Conductor Anderson had made six round trips, and Engineman O'Lee had made seven round trips over this line between Louisville and Lexington.

Only thirteen minutes elapsed between the time when Anderson and O'Lee signed for orders at "HK" tower and were informed by the train dispatcher that No. 15 was on time, and the time of the collision. Notwithstanding that they were experienced men with good records and were familiar with this road, it is apparent that Conductor Anderson and Engineman O'Lee overlooked train No. 15.

At the time of this accident, the C. & O. engine and train crew had been on duty seven hours and thirty minutes; prior to this period Conductor Anderson had been off duty 16 hours and 55 minutes, and Engineman O'Lee had been off duty 9 hours and 35 minutes.