

Inv-2104

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

BUREAU OF SAFETY

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ACCIDENT ON THE  
ERIE RAILROAD

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GLEN ECHO, OHIO

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OCTOBER 13, 1936

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2104

SUMMARY

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Railroad: Erie

Date: October 13, 1936

Location: Glen Echo, Ohio

Kind of accident: Head-end collision

Trains involved: C.C.C. & St.L. Freight : Erie Wrecker

Train numbers: Extra 2362 East : Extra 2715 West

Engine numbers: 2362 : 2715

Consist: 74 cars, caboose : diner, tool car,  
truck car, der-  
rick, rail car

Speed: 8 m.p.h. : 4 m.p.h.

Track: Accident occurred on curve with long tan-  
gent approaching from each direction.

Weather: Clear

Time: 10 a.m.

Method of operation: Timetable, train orders, and manual block  
system.

Casualties: Five injured.

Cause: Failure of operator to display train-order  
signal and to deliver hold order, and his  
further failure to restore block signal to  
stop position after passage of preceding  
train.

December 1, 1936

To the Commission:

On October 13, 1936, there was a head-end collision between a Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway freight train and an Erie Railroad wreck train on the tracks of the Erie Railroad near Glen Echo, Ohio, which resulted in the injury of five employees. This accident was investigated in conjunction with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

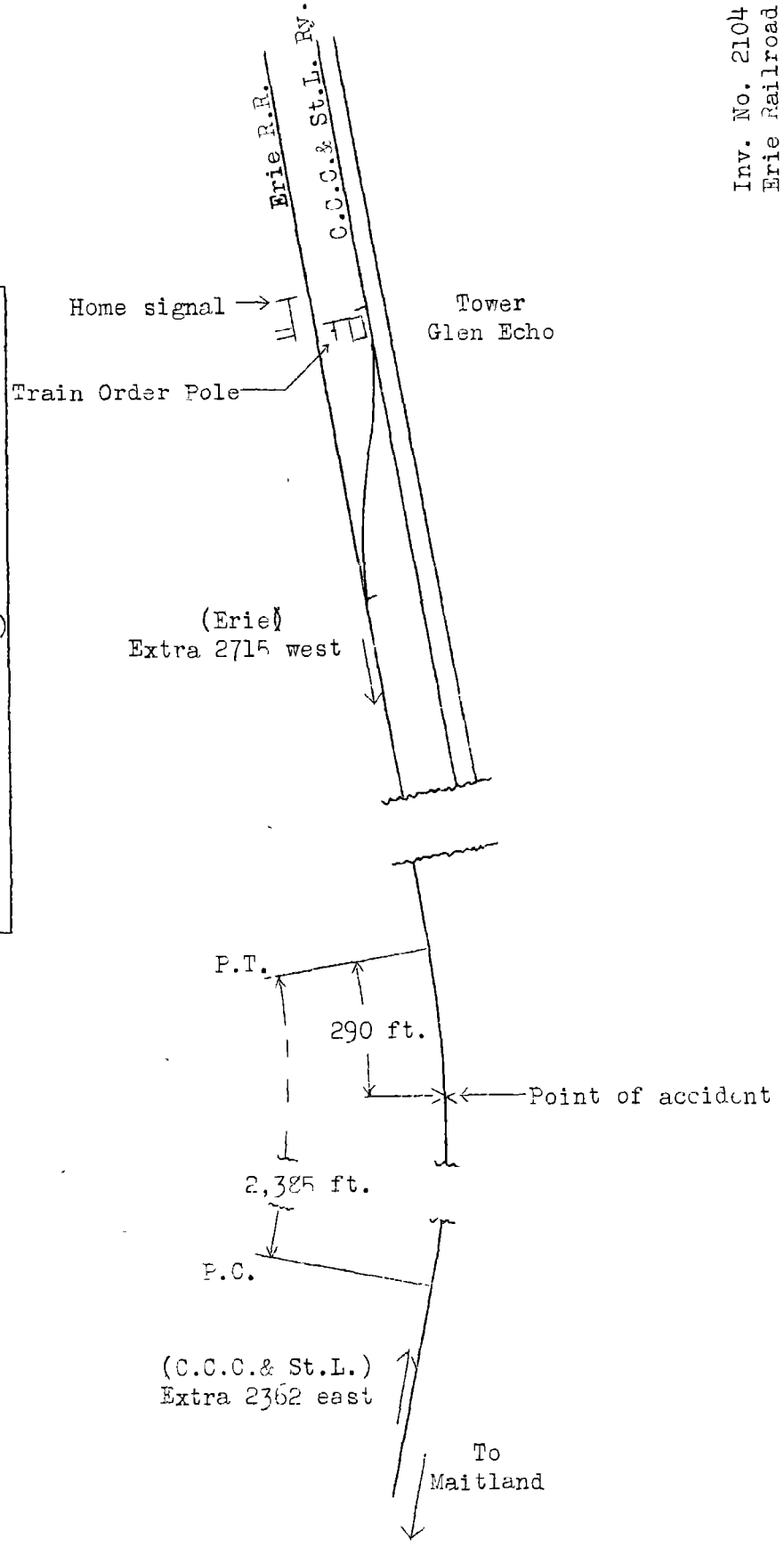
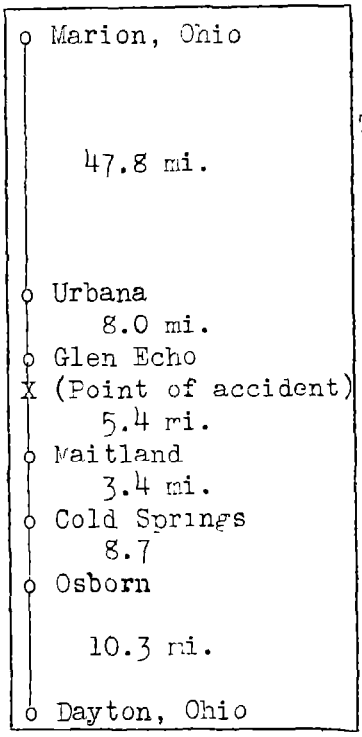
#### Location and method of operation

This accident occurred on the Second Subdivision of the Kent Division, extending between Dayton and Marion, Ohio, a distance of 83.6 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable, train orders, and a manual block system. Trains of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway, hereinafter referred to as the C.C.C. & St.L., are operated over this line between Cold Springs and Glen Echo, a distance of 8.8 miles. The accident occurred about 2 miles west of Glen Echo; approaching this point from the east, the track is tangent for a long distance, followed by a 1° curve to the right 2,385 feet in length, the accident occurring on this curve at a point 290 feet from its eastern end. Approaching from the west, there is a long tangent followed by the curve on which the accident occurred. The grade for west-bound trains is 0.16 percent ascending at the point of accident.

Glen Echo interlocking tower and telegraph office is owned, maintained and operated by the C.C.C. & St.L. The tower is located between the tracks of the two railroads and the home interlocking signal governing west-bound movements on the Erie is located north of the track and about 60 feet east of the tower, while directly opposite the tower and just south of the track there is a train-order signal pole, about 6 feet in height, with a hole in its upper end to accommodate a flag when there are train orders for delivery to a train.

Rules 5 and 6 of the train dispatchers' block system rules read as follows:

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5. Signals must be kept in position displaying the most restrictive indication, except when displayed for an immediate movement, upon authority of Train Dispatcher.

6. When a train order is to be delivered to a train the fixed signal must be displayed at STOP for the track and in the direction of the approaching train, and a flag or light must be displayed in the place provided for that purpose, a red flag or red light indicating "31" orders or "19" orders that restrict the superiority of the train at that point, a yellow flag or yellow light indicating other "19" orders.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 10 a.m.

#### Description

C.C.C. & St.L. Extra 2362, an east-bound freight train, consisted of 74 cars and a caboose, hauled by New York Central engine 2362, and was in charge of Conductor Reuthe and Engineman Frey. At Osborn, 17.5 miles west of Glen Echo, train order 9 was put out to Extra 2362 on form 19, this order reading as follows:

Eng 2362 run Extra and has right over  
all Westbound trains Cold Springs to  
Glen Echo and will wait at Cold Springs  
until 925 am Maitland until 935 am

Extra 2362 passed Cold Springs at 9:43 a.m., according to the train sheet, passed Maitland, 5.4 miles west of Glen Echo, at 9:54 a.m., and was approaching Glen Echo when it collided with Extra 2715 while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 8 miles per hour.

Erie Extra 2715, a west-bound wreck train, consisted of 1 diner, 1 tool car, 1 truck car, 1 Derrick and 1 rail car, in the order named, hauled by engine 2715, and was in charge of Conductor Doyle and Engineman Hummer. This train left Marion, 55.8 miles east of Glen Echo, at 7:52 a.m., according to the train sheet, with orders to run extra Marion to Cold Springs. Train order 9, above quoted, had been put out on form 19, addressed to all trains west and to the operator at Glen Echo, but the proper signals were not displayed by the operator and

Extra 2715 passed that point at 9:55 a.m., according to the train sheet, without receiving a copy of the order, and collided with Extra 2362 while traveling at a speed estimated to have been about 4 miles per hour.

Both engines remained upright on the rails, with their front ends damaged; the second to the seventh cars in Extra 2362 were derailed and damaged, the tender of Erie Extra 2715 was derailed and telescoped the diner for a considerable distance, and the front end of the tool car in the Erie train was slightly damaged. The employees injured were the conductor, head brakeman, wreck crane engineman, and two car repairers on Extra 2715.

#### Summary of evidence

Operator DeLong, of the C.C.C. & St.L., on duty at Glen Echo, stated that Extra 700, a west-bound motor car, had arrived at Glen Echo at 8:44 a.m. and that he cleared the block for that train. It departed at 9:11 a.m., and he then arranged some train orders and forgot about returning the signal to stop position, nor did he display a flag on the train-order pole as required by rule. He had no knowledge that Extra 2715 was coming, the block system being handled by the dispatcher instead of by the operators getting in touch with each other; when he heard an engine whistle he went to a window, and saw the train; he then looked at the block signal and saw that it was in proceed position. He restored the signal to stop position immediately, but the engine then was right by the signal and it continued westward without stopping. Operator DeLong said he ran outside in an endeavor to flag the train but did not see anyone on the rear end; there were 10 or 12 men sitting on a flat car, either the rear car or the car ahead of it, but they did not seem to look toward him. Operator DeLong knew that he was required to display a red flag in the place provided for that purpose, so as to indicate that he had a hold order for delivery, also that he should have restored the block signal to the normal stop position after the passage of Extra 700.

Engineman Hummer, of Extra 2715, stated that as his train approached Glen Echo the home signal was displaying a proceed indication; the speed of his train was about 30 miles per hour and he sounded the whistle for a road crossing located about 200 feet east of the signal. He said he watched the signal until the engine reached it and that it was in the clear position when he passed it; he did not see the operator, nor did he look back at the block to see whether it changed, and the first he knew of anything wrong was on seeing some black object across the inside of the curve, about 20 car lengths distant, and on discovering that it was an engine he applied the air brakes in emergency, reducing the speed to about 4 miles per hour by the time the

collision occurred. Fireman Setterfield was on the outside of the curve and was not aware of anything wrong until the air brakes were applied in emergency just prior to the accident. He also stated that the signal at Glen Echo was in the clear position until it passed out of his range of vision; he did not see anyone around the tower, and did not look back after passing it.

Conductor Doyle, Head Brakeman Laux and Flagman Finley, of Extra 2715, were in the diner, the first car in the train, and the conductor entrusted the flagman with the duty of observing the signals at Glen Echo. The engine whistle was sounded, with the speed of the train about 25 or 30 miles per hour, and the flagman went out on the left side of the car and then came back in and reported that everything was clear. Conductor Doyle did not think there were any workmen riding on the rear car of the wreck train, saying that he was positive they were on the tool car, this being the second car. Flagman Finley said that he did not see anyone around the tower when he went outside and looked for orders, and after passing the station he did not look back; he did not see the home interlocking signal. Head Brakeman Laux heard the crossing whistle signal sounded for Glen Echo and looked out when passing that point, but he did not see anyone around the tower nor did he know the position of the signal, and he was depending upon the flagman to ascertain whether or not there were orders for the train.

Members of the crew of C.C.C. & St.L. Extra 2362 were unaware of anything wrong until immediately prior to the accident. Engineman Frey, who was on the outside of the curve, said the speed of his train was about 15 or 18 miles per hour. Fireman Rathfelder and Head Brakeman Carey saw the opposing train across the inside of the curve and shouted a warning of danger; the engineman immediately applied the air brakes in emergency and all of these employees jumped before the collision occurred.

Signal Maintainer Prather, of the C.C.C. & St.L., was oiling the switches of the interlocking plant as Extra 2715 approached and he said he heard the engine whistle sounded. He was about 500 feet east of the tower and on looking westward toward the block he saw that it was in the proceed position and then saw it change to stop, just as the back end of the tender passed it, following which the operator came out and attempted to flag the train with a newspaper after it had passed.

Dispatcher Sharrock, of the Erie, stated that immediately after Extra 2362 passed Maitland that fact was reported to him and he called Operator DeLong at Glen Echo and told him that the freight train had passed Maitland at 9:54 a.m. and instructed

the operator to arrange to get the wrecking outfit by as soon as possible, but did not tell the operator anything about what time the wrecking outfit would be at Glen Echo and he expected that the operator would have a red signal displayed, in addition to the home signal, so as to protect the order for all west-bound trains. After Extra 2715 passed Glen Echo without having received the order, the operator did not report it as having passed there, and the first knowledge the dispatcher had of the occurrence of the accident was when Trainmaster Bordwell notified him.

#### Discussion

Train order 9, giving Extra 2332 rights over all west-bound trains between Glen Echo and Cold Springs, was addressed to all west-bound trains and also to the operator at Glen Echo; this order was made complete at 9:06 a.m. Operator DeLong cleared the block to permit Extra 700 to proceed westward, which it did at 9:11 a.m., and then the operator neglected to return the block signal to stop position, neither did he display a red flag to show that he had a hold order for west-bound. When Operator DeLong heard the whistle of Extra 2715 he restored the signal to the stop position, but too late to stop the train; then he endeavored to flag it, but to no avail. Operator DeLong knew that he should have kept the signals in position to display the most restrictive indication, and that with a hold order to be delivered he should have displayed a red flag on the train-order signal pole.

#### Conclusions

This accident was caused by the failure of an operator to display a train-order signal and to deliver a hold order, and by his further failure to restore a block signal to the stop position after the passage of a preceding train.

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. PATTERSON,

Director.