

TRAFFIC SPEED REPORT

NO. 67

NOVEMBER 1959

NO. 26

*Joint
Highway
Research
Project*

*PURDUE UNIVERSITY
LAFAYETTE INDIANA*

by

D.F. PETTY

Progress Report

TRAFFIC SPEED REPORT NO. 67

TO: K. B. Woods, Director
Joint Highway Research Project

November 19, 1959

FROM: H. L. Michael, Assistant Director
Joint Highway Research Project

File: 8-3-3
Project: C-36-10C

Attached is Traffic Speed Report No. 67 which has been prepared by Mr. Donald F. Petty, Research Assistant on our staff under the direction of Professor H. L. Michael.

This report presents the speed data and an analysis of these data collected during the summer of 1959. The project has conducted similar studies at the same locations semi-annually for the past twenty years.

Of particular interest in the results of this study is the 6.1 MPH increase in the average speed of heavy trucks on four-lane highways. This increase is probably due to the 5 MPH increase in the speed limit for such trucks on such highways.

Copies of this report will be distributed as usual to the Indiana State Police, the Indiana Office of Traffic Safety and the Bureau of Public Roads. The report is submitted for the record.

Respectfully submitted,

H. L. Michael

H. L. Michael, Secretary

HLM:pg

Attachment

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Progress Report

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By

Donald F. Petty, Research Assistant

Joint Highway Research Project

Project No: C-36-10C

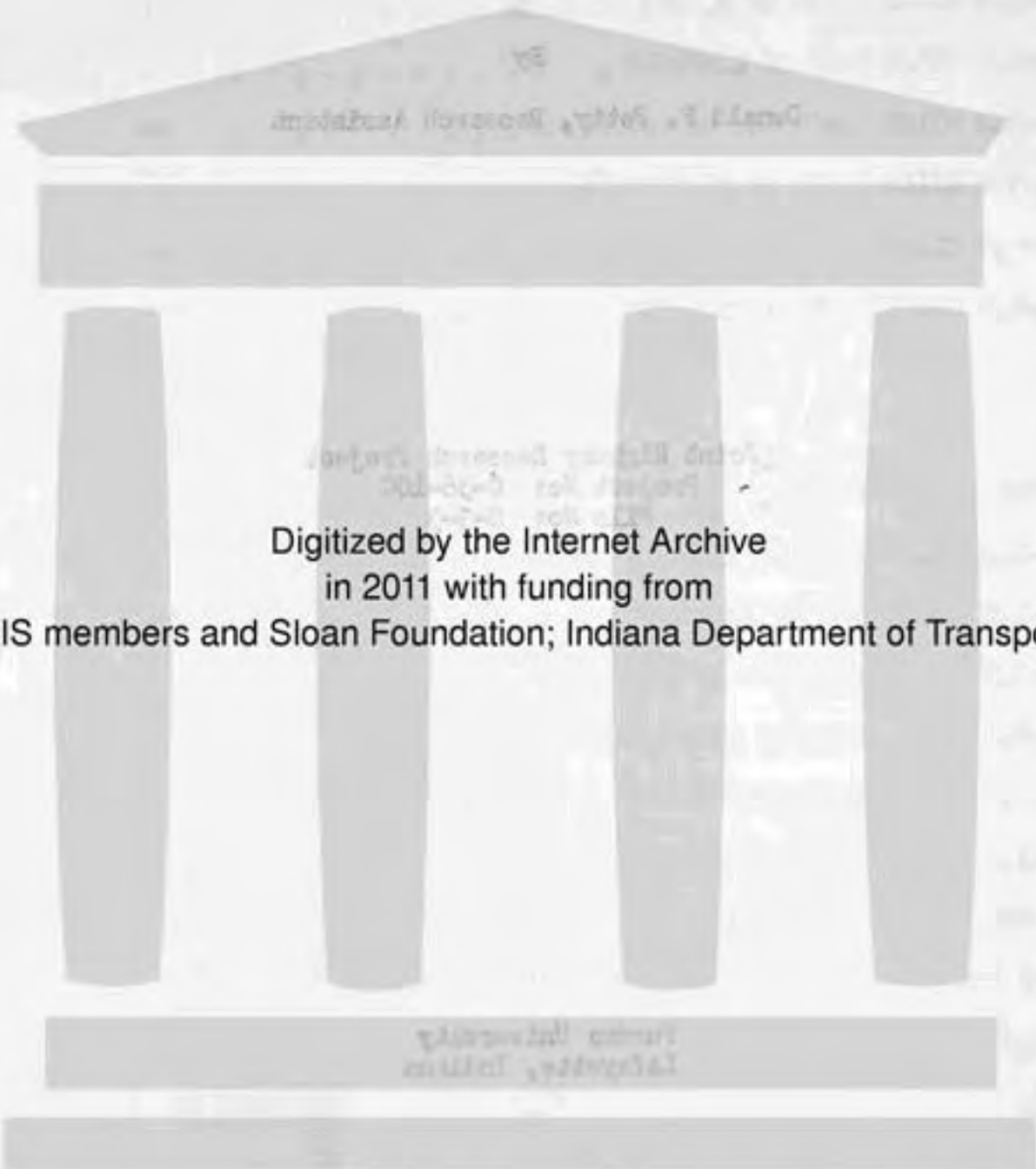
File No: 8-3-3

**Purdue University
Lafayette, Indiana**

November 19, 1959

Progress Report

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TRAFFIC SPEED REPORT NO. 67

This report covers spot speed observations made during July and August 1959. All observations were made of free moving vehicles on level tangent sections of rural highways. The locations of the speed stations were the same as for previous studies and are as follows:

1. U.S. 52-1.0 miles South of South junction of S.R. 28 (Dual Lanes)
2. U.S. 52-1.0 miles West of Klondike (Dual Lanes)
3. U.S. 52-2.2 miles Northwest of Templeton (2 Lane)
4. U.S. 31-7.2 miles North of Perrysburg (2 Lane)
5. S.R. 25-0.7 miles South of Americus (2 Lane)
6. U.S. 41-1.0 miles North of Boswell (2 Lane)

An Electromatic Radar Speed Meter was used to collect the data for this study. The meter was concealed as part of a rural mailbox and placed from two to three feet from the edge of the pavement. It was directed along the highway at a small angle with respect to the direction of traffic so that it was not necessary to make an angle correction to the readings.

The radar equipment used will not operate properly if the voltage varies more than minus 1/2 volt or plus 1 volt from the optimum twelve volts. The voltage was therefore checked periodically in the field and maintained within the desired range. Also, correct calibration was maintained by periodically checking it with a 60 mile per hour tuning fork.

The observers concealed themselves from traffic as much as local conditions permitted. A 150 foot cable was used between the meter reading unit and the pick-up unit. It is therefore believed that the speeds of the observed vehicles were not influenced by the observers or the equipment.

A summary of the results of this study, as well as of the last seven studies, is given in Table I. Indiana state law limits the speed of passenger cars and trucks under 5,000 pounds (GVW) to 65 miles per hour. The speed limit of trucks over 5,000 pounds (GVW) is 50 miles per hour on all highways except that on four-lane highways which have a median strip of at least twenty feet in width the speed limit is 55 miles per hour. This new speed limit for trucks has been in effect since about May 1959. However, very few speed limit signs have been posted in the state to reflect this change. It also is not known what percentage of the truck drivers know about this speed limit change.

Truck speeds are shown in the tables for three groups: light trucks, heavy trucks, and all trucks; also it is noted whether the road is 2 lane or 4 lane. All 4 lane observation stations were on highways with a median of greater than twenty feet. Since weights were not taken in this study, light trucks (less than 5,000 pounds) were considered to be only panel trucks and pick-up trucks. All other types of trucks were classified as heavy (over 5,000 pounds).

The passenger car data were also classified in three groups: Indiana, out-of-state, and all passenger cars. The classification was determined by observing the license plate on each passenger car after it had passed the station.

So that an easy comparison can be made between the results of the present study and the last previous study, the results from each speed station for both studies are tabulated in Tables II through VII. All speed observations for this study were taken at approximately the same locations as for the previous study.

Average and 85th percentile speeds were computed for each vehicle group from the sample of vehicles taken at each study site and some of the differences between average speeds thus computed and average speeds similarly computed for the last study (December-March 1959) are briefly discussed. The average speed for all passenger cars increased 0.2 miles per hour since the last study while the average speed for all trucks increased 1.6 miles per hour. Indiana passenger cars increased their average speed on two-lane highways by 0.1 miles per hour while their average on four-lane highways increased 0.2 miles per hour. Out-of-state passenger cars decreased on average speed by 2.4 miles per hour on two-lane highways while their average speed on four-lane highways decreased by 1.6 miles per hour.

The average speed for light trucks decreased 0.7 miles per hour on two-lane highways and 3.6 miles per hour on four-lane highways. Heavy trucks increased their average speed on two-lane highways by 1.2 miles per hour and 6.1 miles per hour on four-lane highways. This average speed increase for heavy trucks on four-lane highways is probably the effect of the new Indiana speed limit.

Trend information on average speeds and 85th percentile speeds for passenger cars and trucks is shown in Table I and Figures 7 and 8.

TABLE I

SUMMARY OF SPOT SPEED OBSERVATIONS
ON INDIANA HIGHWAYS

(Free-Moving Vehicles on Level, Tangent Sections)

	Passenger Cars				Trucks			
	Ind Mean	Non-Ind Mean	All Mean	All 85 per	Light Mean	Heavy Mean	All Mean	
Two-lane Highways	Feb. '56	54.9	58.0	55.9	63.2	47.1	43.2	44.4
	Aug. '56	55.0	56.3	55.5	63.4	50.6	45.5	46.6
	May '57	55.6	59.1	56.9	64.0	50.2	44.8	46.1
	Aug. '57	55.5	56.7	55.9	62.1	51.7	45.8	47.3
	Aug. '58	54.3	56.3	55.0	61.7	53.0	46.3	47.8
	Mar. '59	55.5	57.7	56.1	61.9	50.4	45.4	46.3
	Aug. '59	55.6	55.3	55.9	63.2	49.7	46.7	48.0
Four-lane Highways	Feb. '56	58.1	60.1	58.7	65.7	47.8	45.2	45.8
	Aug. '56	57.4	58.8	58.2	66.8	49.6	46.0	47.4
	May '57	59.9	63.6	61.0	69.0	52.2	46.0	47.9
	Aug. '57	57.5	59.9	58.5	64.8	52.0	46.6	47.6
	Aug. '58	58.0	59.6	58.7	65.0	54.3	49.0	50.0
	Mar. '59	58.2	61.7	59.0	64.9	53.6	47.0	48.4
	Aug. '59	58.4	60.1	59.1	64.5	50.0	53.1	49.5
All Highways	Feb. '56	56.0	58.6	56.8	63.8	47.3	44.0	44.9
	Aug. '56	55.7	57.3	56.4	64.5	50.2	45.6	46.9
	May '57	57.2	60.3	58.3	66.0	50.9	45.2	46.6
	Aug. '57	56.2	58.3	56.9	63.2	51.8	46.1	47.4
	Aug. '58	55.7	57.9	56.5	63.1	53.4	47.5	48.7
	Mar. '59	56.6	59.0	57.2	63.1	51.5	45.9	47.0
	Aug. '59	56.5	58.4	57.4	63.5	50.6	47.8	48.6

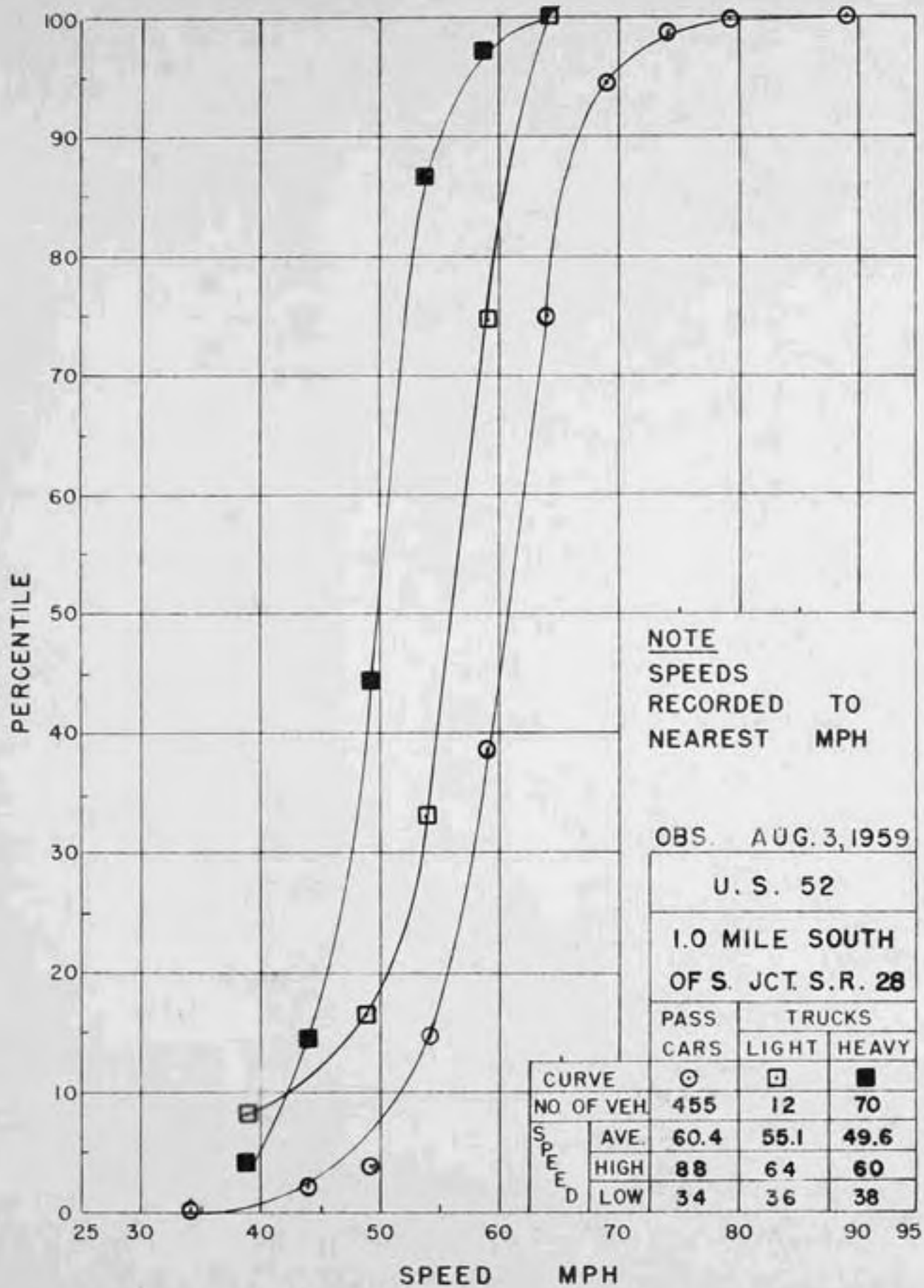


FIGURE I

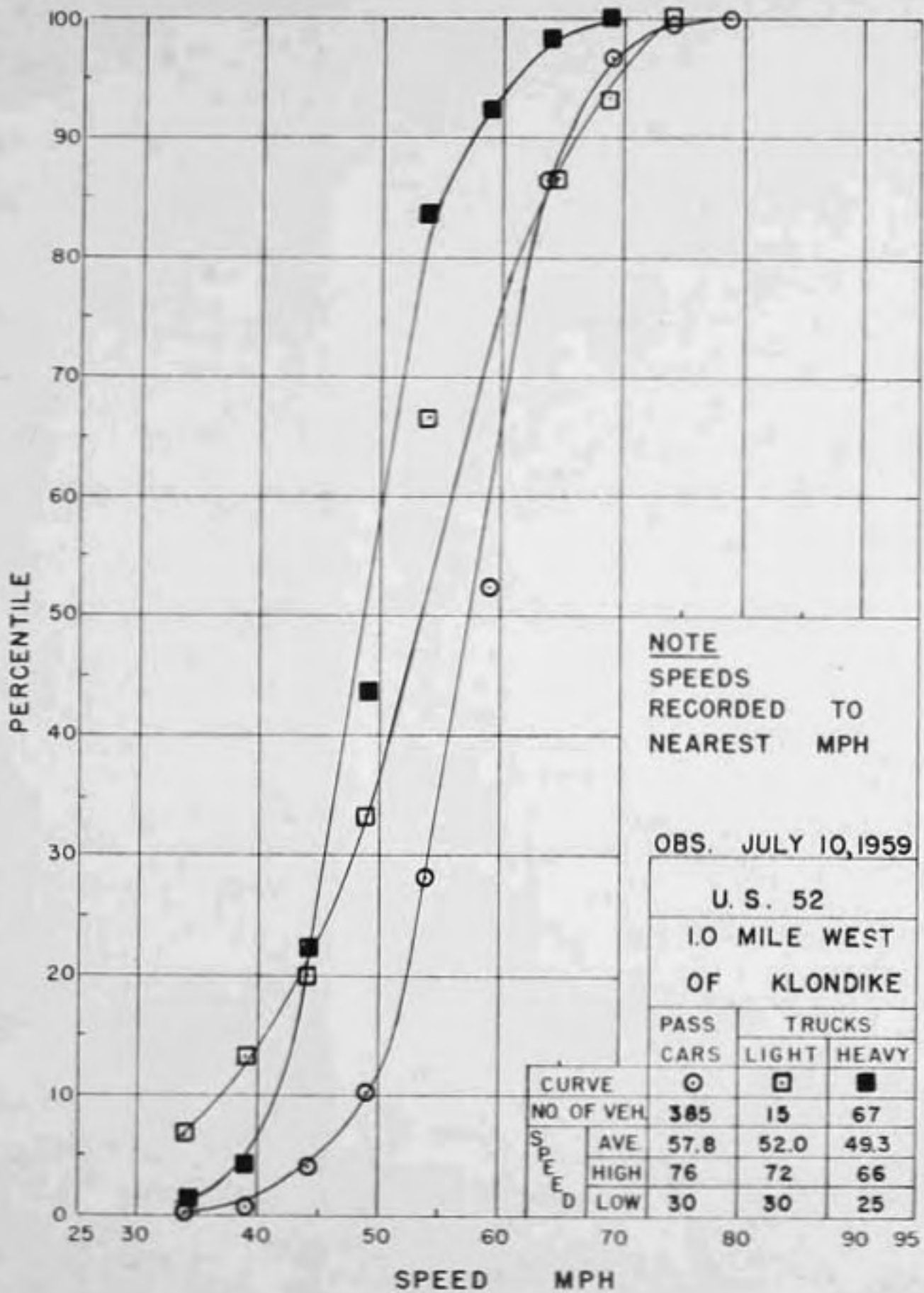


FIGURE 2

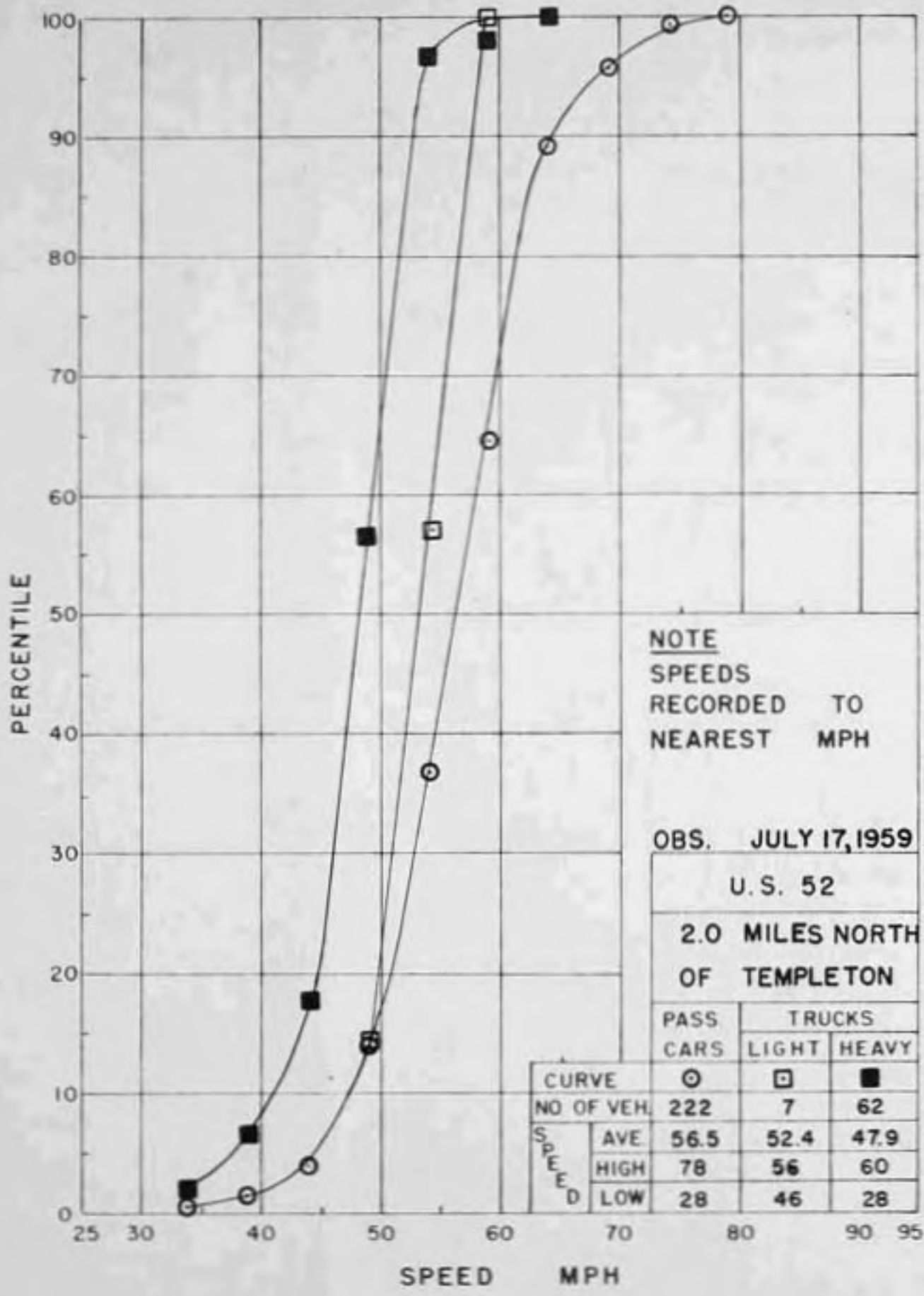


FIGURE 3

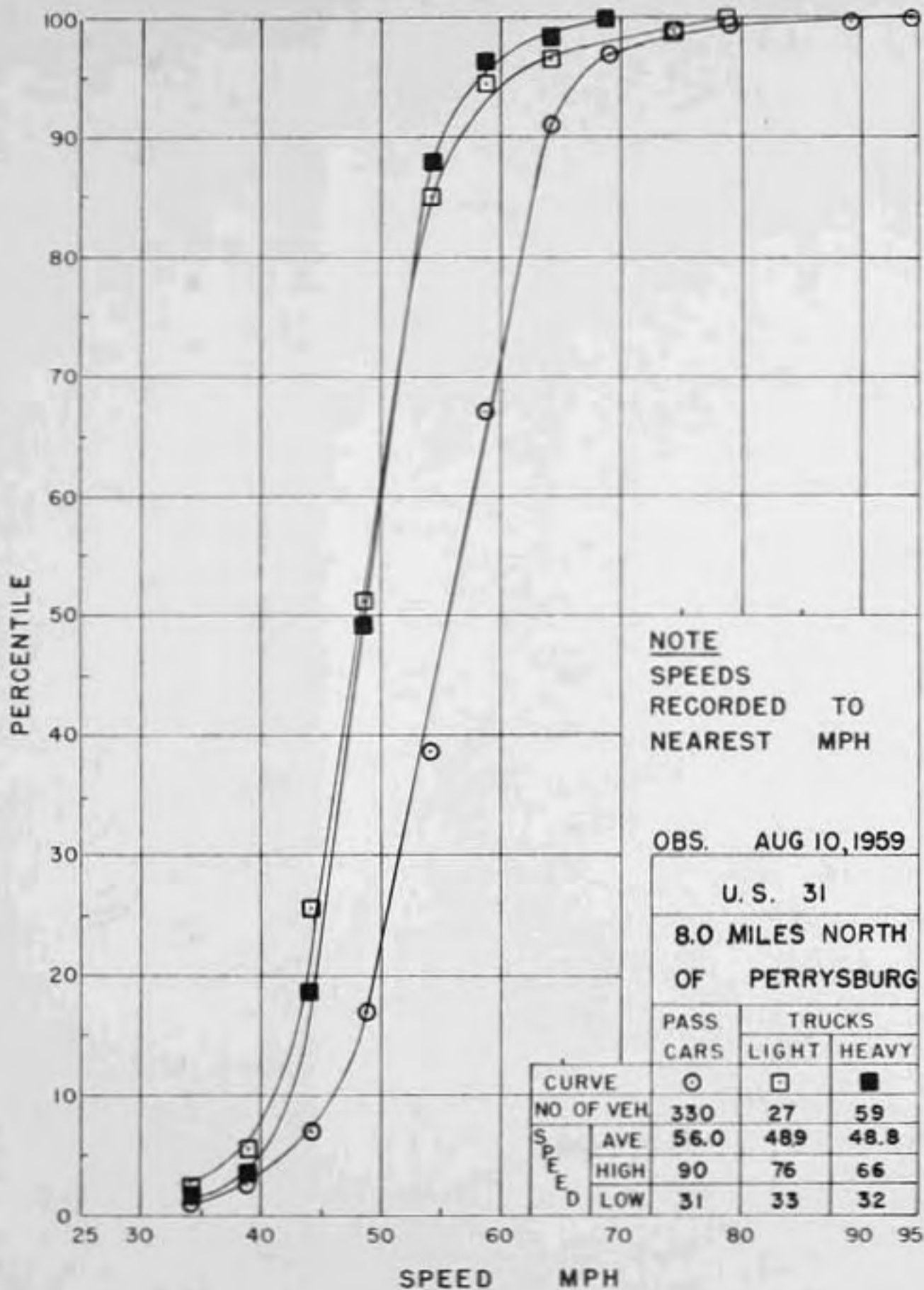


FIGURE 4

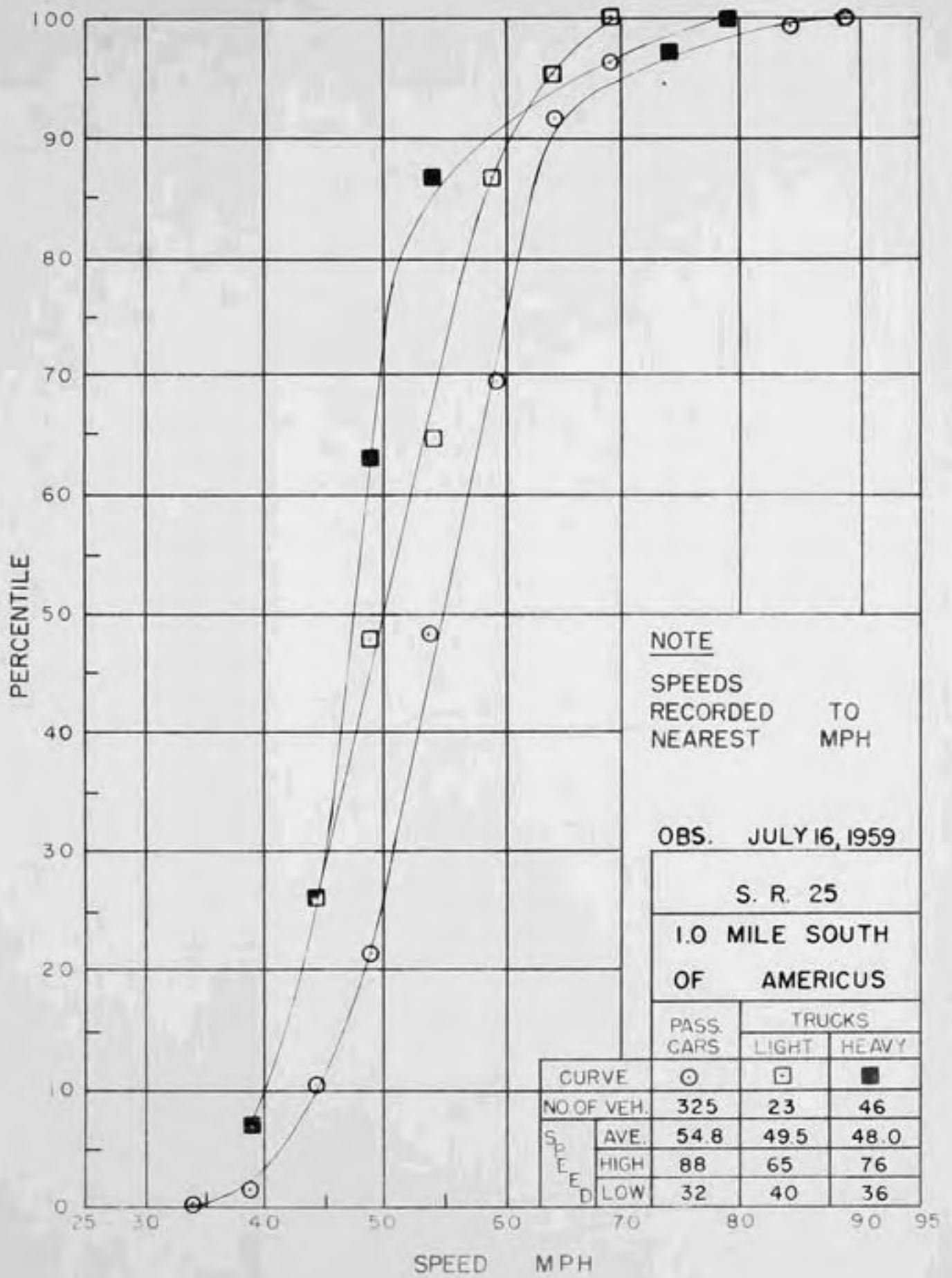


FIGURE 5

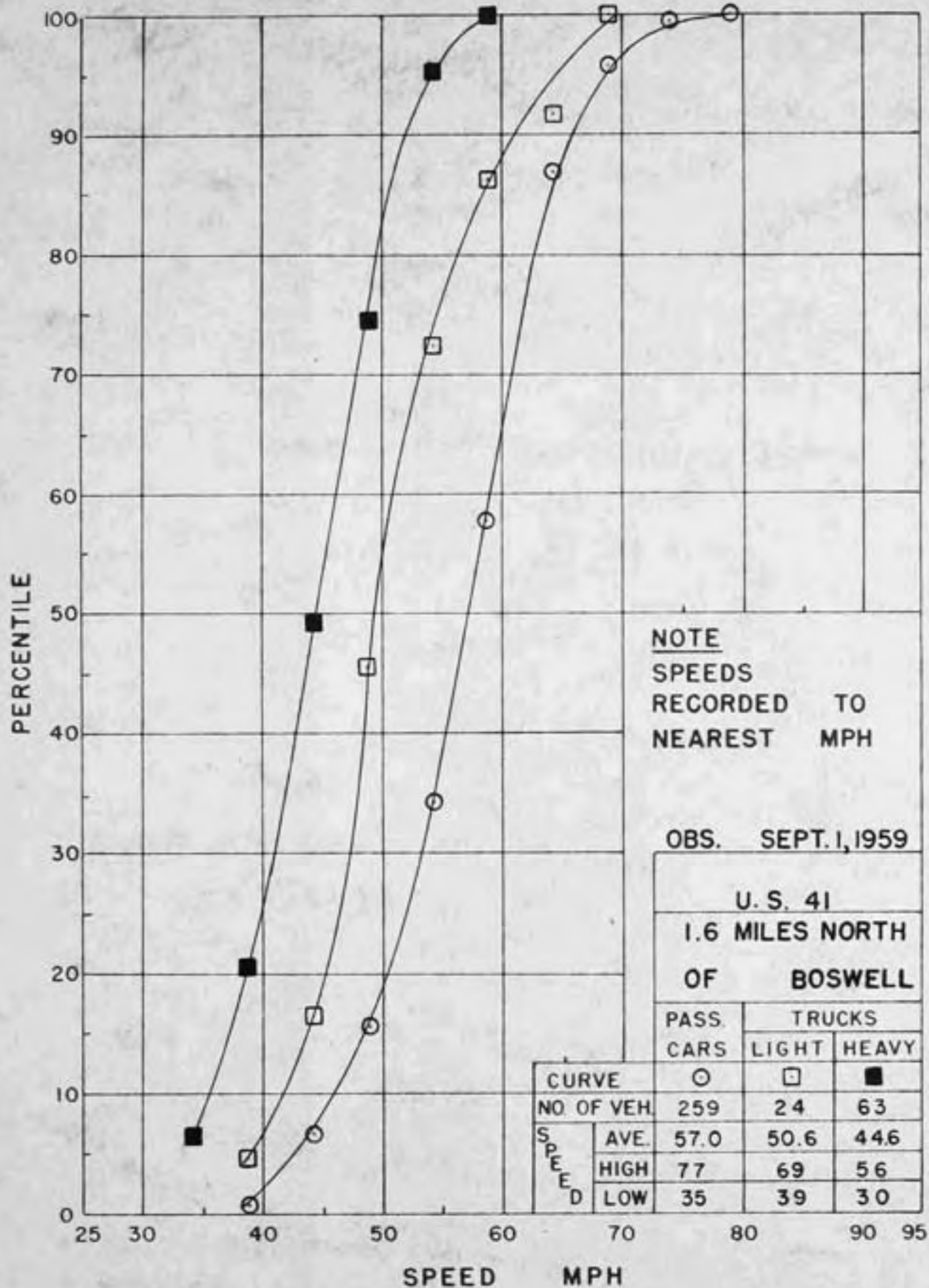
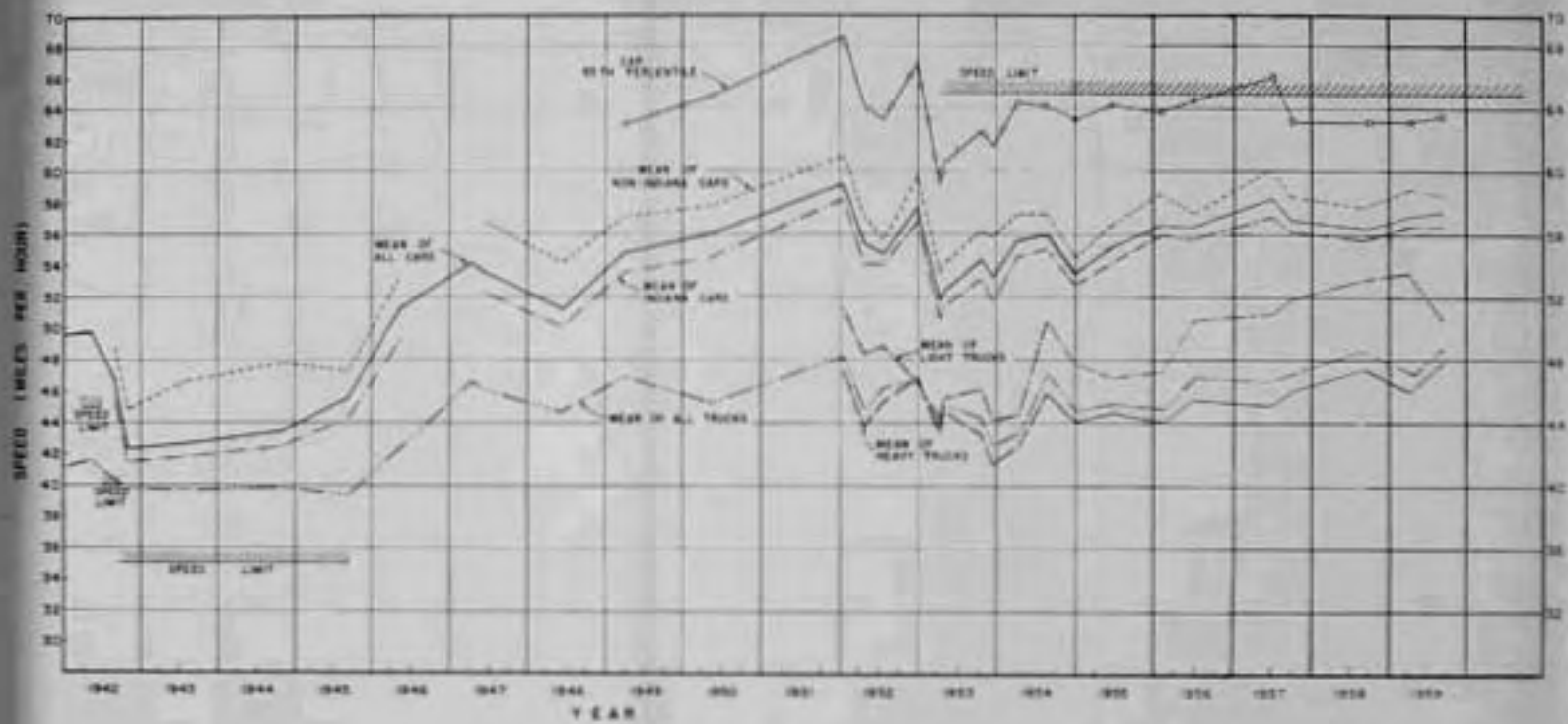


FIGURE 6



INDIANA RURAL SPEED TRENDS 1942-1960

FIG. 7

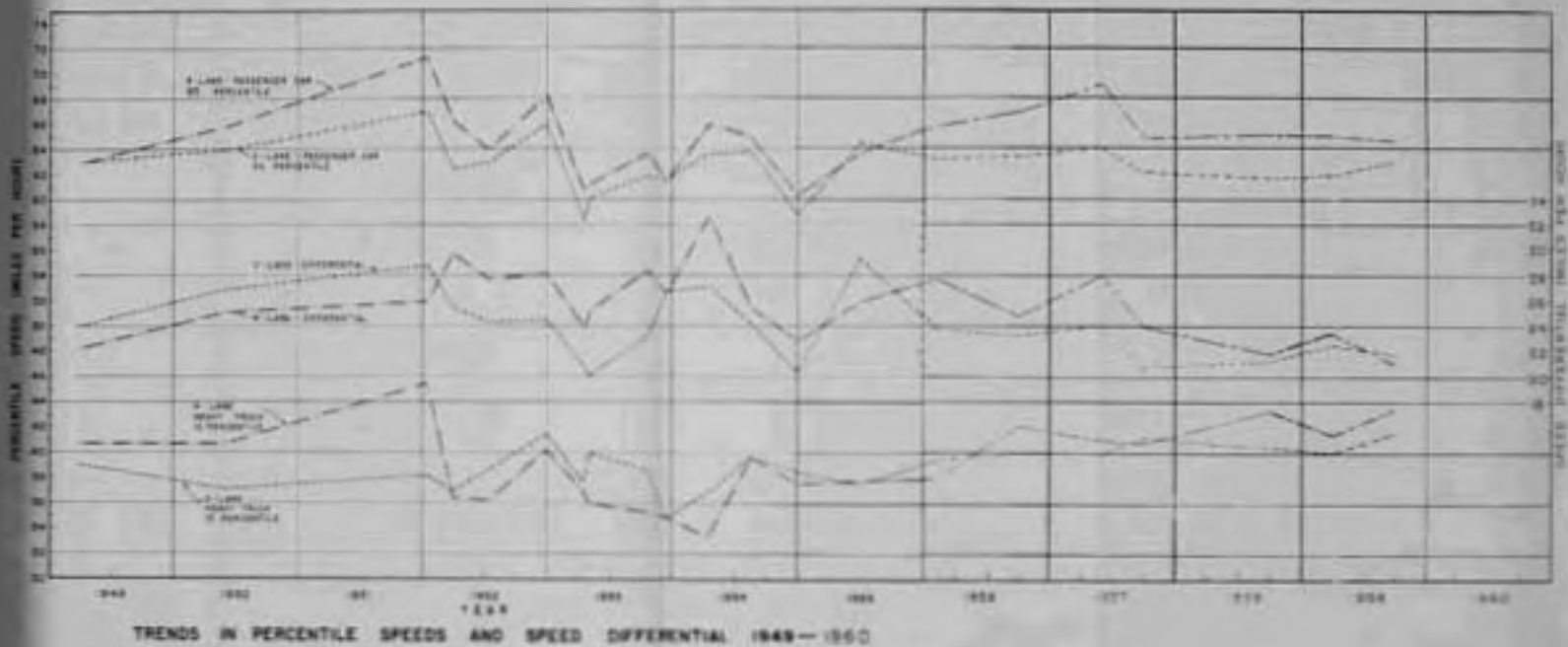


FIG. 8