

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

---

INVESTIGATION NO. 2655  
THE CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
AT COLUMBUS, GA., ON  
DECEMBER 1, 1942

---

SUMMARY

---

Railroad: Central of Georgia  
Date: December 1, 1942  
Location: Columbus, Ga.  
Kind of accident: Collision with bus on street  
Equipment involved: Yard engine with cars : Bus  
Engine number: 623 :  
Consist: 35 cars :  
Speed: 6 m. p. h. : 6-8 m. p. h.  
Operation: Timetable and train orders  
Track: Single; tangent; 0.9 percent  
descending grade eastward  
Street: Tangent; parallel to railroad  
Weather: Clear  
Time: About 7:40 p. m.  
Casualties: 1 killed; 15 injured  
Cause: Accident caused by bus being  
driven upon track immediately  
in front of an approaching engine

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

---

INVESTIGATION NO. 2655

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS  
UNDER THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 6, 1910.

THE CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY COMPANY

---

January 8, 1943.

---

Accident at Columbus, Ga., on December 1, 1942, caused by  
a bus being driven upon the track immediately in  
front of an approaching engine.

---

1  
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

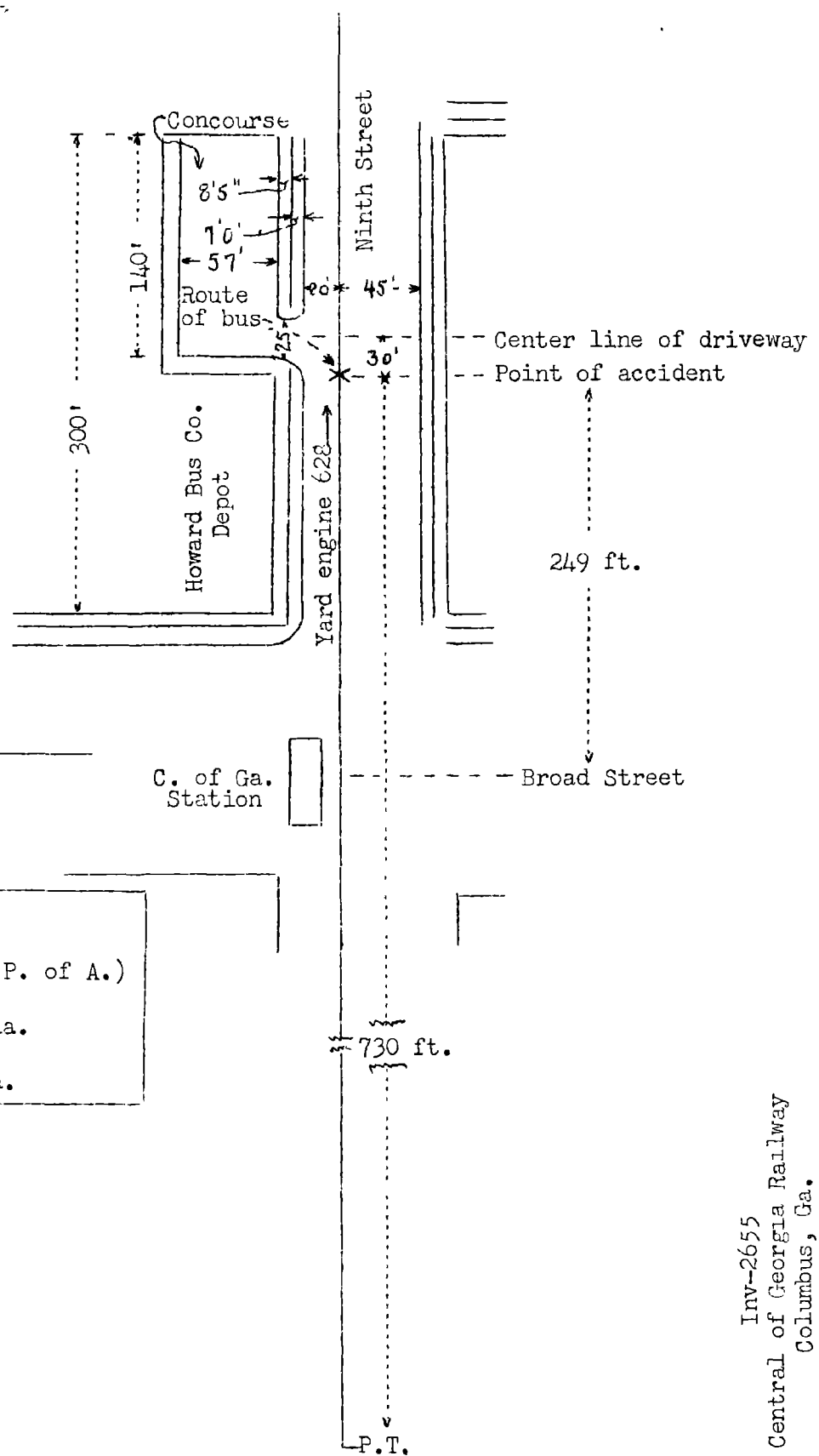
On December 1, 1942, there was a collision between a  
yard engine and a bus on the Central of Georgia Railway at  
Columbus, Ga., which resulted in the death of one train-  
service employee and the injury of 15 bus passengers.

---

<sup>1</sup>Under authority of section 17 (2) of the Interstate Com-  
merce Act the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the  
Commission to Commissioner Patterson for consideration and  
disposition.

To Columbus →

← To Andalusia



- Columbus, Ga.  
1.1 mi.
- X Broad Street (P. of A.)  
5.0 mi.
- Brick Yard, Ala.  
132.2 mi.
- Andalusia, Ala.

C. of Ga.  
Station

--- Broad Street

Ninth Street

--- Center line of driveway  
--- Point of accident

249 ft.

730 ft.

P.T.

Inv-2655  
 Central of Georgia Railway  
 Columbus, Ga.  
 December 1, 1942

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Columbus Division designated as the Andalusia District and extending between Columbus, Ga., and Andalusia, Ala., a distance of 138.3 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 249 feet east of the Broad Street station. The main track is on Ninth Street and is, respectively, 45 feet and 20 feet horizontally distant from the south and north curbs. Approaching from the west on the railroad, there is a tangent a distance of 730 feet to the point of accident and a considerable distance beyond. At the point of accident the grade for east-bound trains is 0.9 percent descending.

Between the curbs and a line 18 inches outside each rail, the street is surfaced with concrete. The 18-inch strip outside each rail and the area between the rails are paved with asphalt. The pavement is level with the top of the rails. On the north side of the street the sidewalk is 8 feet 5 inches wide and a grass plot 7 feet wide lies between the sidewalk and the curb. Starting at Broad Street, the Howard Bus Line station parallels Ninth Street on the north. This is a two-story building, flush with the sidewalk, and about 300 feet in length. At a point 150 feet east of Broad Street, the loading concourse is recessed inward 57 feet from the sidewalk. Egress from the concourse is by a driveway 25 feet wide, which is at right angles with the street and railroad. The concourse and driveway are surfaced with concrete. The grade for south-bound movements from the concourse is slightly descending to the sidewalk, level across the sidewalk, about 9 percent descending 7 feet to the street, and then 1.6 percent ascending 20 feet to the track. Immediately west of the driveway there are two large trees in the grass plot north of the street. The accident occurred about 30 feet west of the center-line of the driveway.

Operating rules read in part as follows:

14. ENGINE AND MOTOR WHISTLE SIGNALS.

Note.--The signals prescribed are illustrated by "o" for short sounds; "\_\_\_" for longer sounds. \* \* \*

SOUND.	INDICATION.
* * *	
(1) ___ ___ o o	Approaching public crossings at grade.
* * *	

18. Yard engines will display the headlight to the front and rear by night. \* \* \*

30. The engine bell must be rung \* \* \* while passing public crossings at grade, or to prevent accident.

31. The whistle must be sounded at all places where required by rule or by law, or to prevent accident.

MOTOR CARRIER RULES AND REGULATIONS of GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION read in part as follows:

Part II DRIVING OF MOTOR VEHICLES

4. No motor vehicle shall be driven recklessly, or so as to endanger life, limb, or property.

14. Every motor vehicle transporting passengers, \* \* \*, shall, upon approaching any railroad grade crossing, be brought to a full stop within 50 feet, but not less than 10 feet, from the nearest rail of such railroad grade cross, and shall not proceed until due caution has been taken to ascertain that the course is clear; \* \* \*.

In the immediate vicinity of the point of accident the maximum authorized speed for all trains is 6 miles per hour.

Description of Accident

Yard engine 628 was hauling 35 loaded cars eastward. At Brick Yard, Ala., 6.1 miles west of Columbus, an air-brake test was made and the brakes functioned properly. Engine 628 departed from Brick Yard about 7:20 p. m., according to the statements of the crew, and while it was moving at an estimated speed of 6 miles per hour it collided with a bus on Ninth Street at a point 249 feet east of the station.

The bus involved was owned by the Howard Bus Line of Columbus, Ga. It bore Georgia license Limited-125 and Georgia Public Service Commission license No. 1913. The driver held Alabama driver's license No. 479555. The bus was a 1929, 4-wheel, twin-motor, Twin-Coach, Model 40, equipped with dual tires on the rear wheels, Westinghouse air brakes on all wheels, and a hand-operated brake on the drive shaft. The bus was 32 feet long, 7 feet 10 inches wide, and 9 feet 3 inches high. It weighed approximately 17,000 pounds and had seating capacity for 40 passengers. The windshield and the side windows were so

arranged that the driver had unrestricted view ahead and to each side. This vehicle moved from the loading concourse of the bus station, proceeded through the driveway, entered Ninth Street in a southwesterly direction and at an angle of 60 degrees to the track, and, while moving at an estimated speed of 6 or 8 miles per hour, it proceeded upon the track where it was struck by yard engine 628.

There was no unusual condition about the bus that obscured the vision of the driver. Because of trees near the curb and the bus station building, the view to the west was materially restricted.

Yard engine 628 was not derailed and it stopped with the front end of the engine about 90 feet east of the point of accident. The front foot-boards were bent against the engine-truck wheels. The bus stopped upright, 6 feet south of the track and parallel to it. The right side of the bus was demolished from the center to the rear end of the body, a distance of 15 feet.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 7:40 p. m.

The train-service employee killed was a brakeman who was on the front foot-board.

### Data

During the 24-hour period beginning at 1 a. m., December 8, 1942, 18 trains and 2 track motor cars traversed Ninth Street. One hundred and six buses entered Ninth Street from the driveway of the bus station concourse. Of these buses, 30 did not stop before proceeding upon the track.

### Discussion

Yard engine 628 was proceeding at an estimated speed of 6 miles per hour. The bell was ringing and the air-alarm whistle, with which the engine was equipped, was being sounded continuously. The headlight was lighted, and the engineer, the engine foreman and the general yardmaster were maintaining a lookout ahead. The fireman was on the deck of the engine. A brakeman was stationed on the right front foot-board and maintaining a lookout for traffic at street intersections. When the engine was about 25 feet west of the driveway at the bus station the engine foreman and the general yardmaster observed a bus emerge from the concourse and proceed upon the track in front of the engine. Both warned the engineer, who immediately moved the brake valve to emergency position but

the distance was not sufficient for engine 628 to stop before colliding with the bus. Since the brakeman was killed in the accident, it could not be learned when he first became aware of the approaching bus. The brakes of the cut of cars had been tested and had functioned properly.

The driver of the bus was an experienced driver. He said that before the bus left the concourse the air-brake pressure was charged, and the headlights and the marker lights were lighted. When the bus entered Ninth Street, he saw engine 628 about 80 feet west of the driveway and was confident that he could safely operate the bus across the track in front of the engine. He depressed the accelerator fully, but before the bus moved clear of the track the accident occurred. Several passengers observed the headlight of the approaching engine, heard the bell ringing and warned the driver. The driver had been off duty 15 hours prior to the time he had started the tour of duty involved and, at the time of the accident, had been on duty about 3 hours. The laws of the state of Georgia require that vehicles transporting passengers must not proceed upon a railroad track until precautions have been taken to ascertain that the way is clear. If the driver involved had taken proper precautions to make certain that it was safe to proceed upon the railroad track, this accident would not have occurred.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a bus being driven upon the track immediately in front of an approaching engine.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this eighth  
day of January, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.