

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2839  
THE CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT IN RE ACCIDENT  
NEAR PARKDALE, ALA., ON  
OCTOBER 27, 1944

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Central of Georgia

Date: October 27, 1944

Location: Parkdale, Ala.

Kind of accident: Head-end collision

Equipment involved: Passenger train : Track motor-car  
and trailer

Train number: 53 :

Engine number: Diesel-electric :  
4000

Consist: 7 cars : Motor-car and  
trailer

Estimated speed: 50 m. p. h. : 15 m. p. h.

Operation: Timetable and train orders

Track: Single; 3<sup>0</sup> curve; level

Weather: Clear

Time: 7:10 a. m.

Casualties: 2 killed; 2 injured

Cause: Operation of track motor-car  
without protection against  
opposing train

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2839

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

THE CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY COMPANY

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November 28, 1944.

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Accident near Parkdale, Ala., on October 27, 1944, caused  
by operation of a track motor-car without protection  
against an opposing train.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

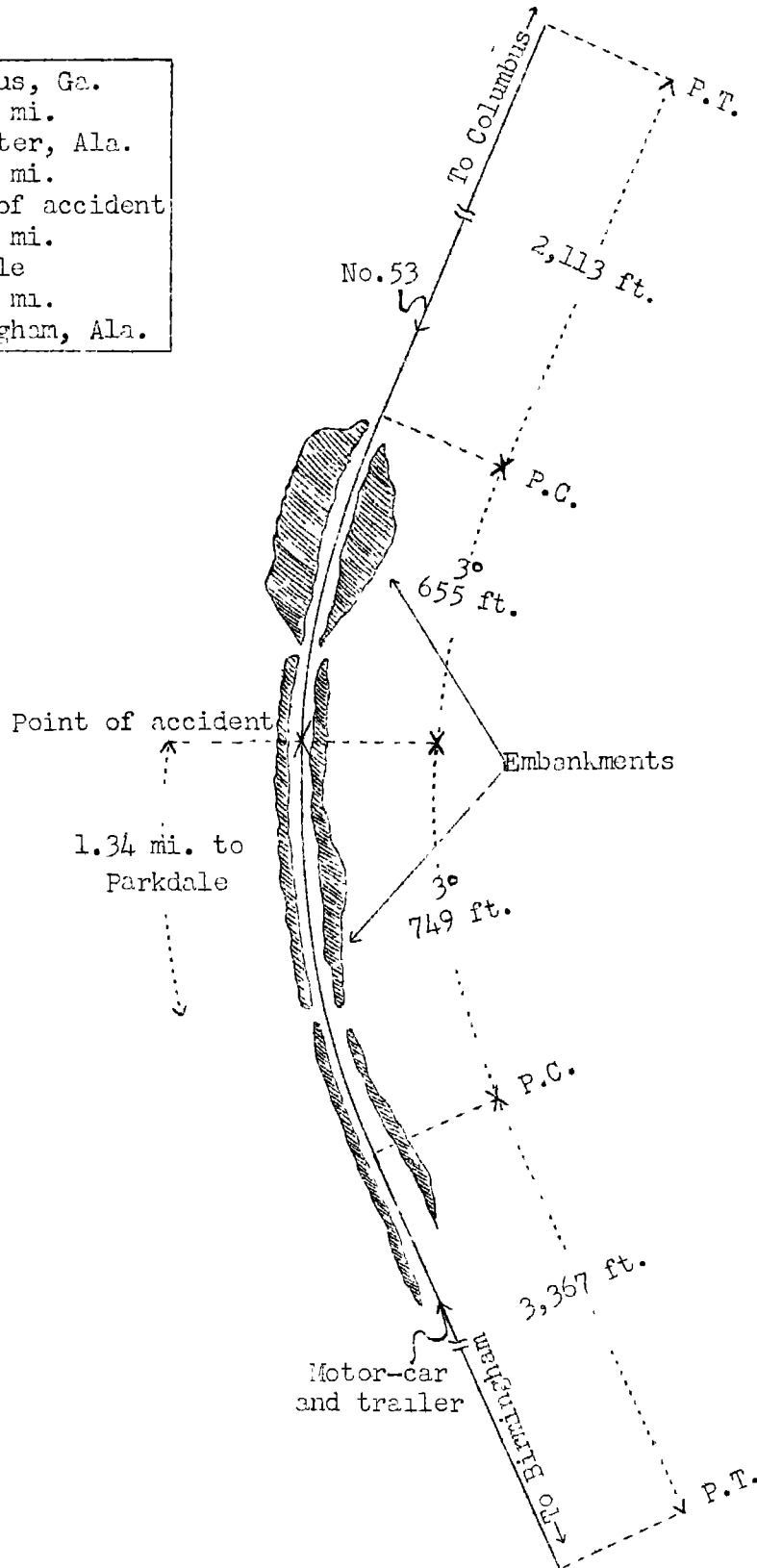
PATTERSON, Chairman:

On October 27, 1944, there was a head-end collision between a passenger train and a track motor-car on the Central of Georgia Railway near Parkdale, Ala., which resulted in the death of two employees and the injury of two employees.

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

- o Columbus, Ga.  
83.60 mi.
- o Goodwater, Ala.  
3.16 mi.
- X Point of accident  
1.34 mi.
- o Parkdale  
63.30 mi.
- o Birmingham, Ala.



Inv. No. 2839  
Central of Georgia Railway  
Parkdale, Ala.  
October 27, 1944

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Columbus Division designated as the Birmingham District and extending westward from Columbus, Ga., to Birmingham, Ala., 151.4 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this was a single-track line over which trains were operated by timetable and train orders. There was no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track 86.76 miles west of Columbus, at a point 1.34 miles east of the station at Parkdale. From the east there was a tangent 2,113 feet in length, which was followed by a 3° curve to the left 655 feet to the point of accident. From the west there was a tangent 3,367 feet in length, which was followed by a 3° curve to the right 749 feet to the point of accident. The grade was level.

Rules of the Maintenance of Way Department read in part as follows:

103. Keep Familiar with Train Movements.--  
The person in charge of the operation of a motor car must keep in touch with the movement of trains, securing the necessary information from the Train Dispatcher.

Instructions governing the operation of track motor-cars read in part as follows:

No motor car or push car must be placed on Main Line Tracks until the proper LINE UP has first been received.

Parties in charge of motor cars will be required at all times to keep themselves informed as to train movements in the vicinity of their operations so as to avoid unnecessary hazards from running on short time ahead of trains or in the face of traffic \* \* \*. Dispatchers will give line-ups to foremen of gangs \* \* \* operating motor cars, when requested. \* \* \* They must protect themselves whenever and wherever necessary. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

Operators of motor cars should have a copy of the current timetable in their possession or on the motor car at all times.

\* \* \*

Before starting, see that the required flagging equipment is in its place on the car.

A metal case should be provided for the fusees and the torpedoes.

EQUIPMENT: - 2 RED flags, 12 or more torpedoes,  
6 fusees \* \* \*

All equipment must be kept in readiness for instant use. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

Men shall be assigned to face both forward and backward to act as lookouts. \* \* \*

\* \* \*

Motor cars should not be run at a speed in excess of FIFTEEN MILES PER HOUR. \* \* \*

\* \* \*.

The maximum authorized speed for the train involved was 70 miles per hour.

#### Description of Accident

No. 53, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of Diesel-electric engine 4000, one dormitory car, two coaches, one dining car, two coaches and one lounge car, in the order named. All cars were of lightweight steel construction. This train departed from Columbus at 5:23 a. m., 8 minutes late, passed Goodwater, 4.5 miles east of Parkdale and the last open office, at 7:07 a. m., 9 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 50 miles per hour it collided with a track motor-car.

The track motor-car and trailer, coupled, in the order named, departed east-bound from Parkdale about 7 a. m., and while moving at an estimated speed of 15 miles per hour it collided with No. 53.

The motor-car and the trailer were demolished. The front end of engine 4000 was slightly damaged.

The weather was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 7:10 a. m.

The employees killed and injured were members of a track force.

### Discussion

The rules governing operation of track motor-cars on this line provided that flag protection must be furnished to protect the movement wherever and whenever necessary. Operators of motor-cars were authorized to obtain information regarding the movement of trains, but they were not permitted to use this information as authority to operate motor-cars without protection.

At 6:50 a. m., about 20 minutes prior to the time the accident occurred, the train dispatcher issued by telephone to the foreman of the motor-car involved, and to other persons, information regarding train movements in this territory. No. 53 was due to pass Parkdale at 7:04 a. m., and, because this train was only a few minutes late on its schedule, the dispatcher informed the persons concerned, including the foreman who was in charge of the motor-car involved, that No. 53 was on time. However, the motor-car and trailer, occupied by the foreman and three laborers, departed from Parkdale about 7 a. m. and was en route to Goodwater, 4.5 miles east of Parkdale, when it was struck by No. 53 about 1.3 miles east of Parkdale. Because of embankments on the inside of the curve, the occupants of the motor-car were unable to see the approaching train, and the enginemen of No. 53 were unable to see the motor-car until just before the collision occurred. After the accident the line-up as issued by the dispatcher, copied in the handwriting of the foreman was found in the foreman's pocket. The surviving members of the track force said the foreman had not told them what information regarding train movements had been obtained. Why the foreman permitted the motor-car to be operated when only a few minutes earlier he had received information that an opposing first-class train then nearly due was on time, and why the motor-car was operated under these circumstances without protection, could not be determined, as he was killed in the accident.

### Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by operation of a track motor-car without protection against an opposing train.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-eighth day of November, 1944.

By the Commission, Chairman Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.