

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2662  
THE CENTRAL OF GEORGIA RAILWAY COMPANY  
REPORT OF AN ACCIDENT  
AT WALDEN, GA., ON  
DECEMBER 16, 1942

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SUMMARY

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Railroad: Central of Georgia  
Date: December 16, 1942  
Location: Walden, Ga.  
Kind of accident: Collision with automobile  
and derailment of train  
Equipment involved: Passenger train : Automobile  
Train number: 33 :  
Engine number: 476 :  
Consist: 12 cars :  
Speed: 50-55 m. p. h. : Not known  
Operation: Signal indications  
Track: Single: 1°10' right curve; level  
Private crossing: Crosses track at right angles  
Weather: Clear  
Time: 1:35 a. m.  
Casualties: 3 killed; 1 injured  
Cause: Accident caused by a passenger  
train striking an automobile  
at a private-road grade crossing

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

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INVESTIGATION NO. 2862

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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February 10, 1943.

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Accident at Walden, Ga., on December 16, 1942, caused by  
a passenger train striking an automobile at a  
private-road grade crossing.

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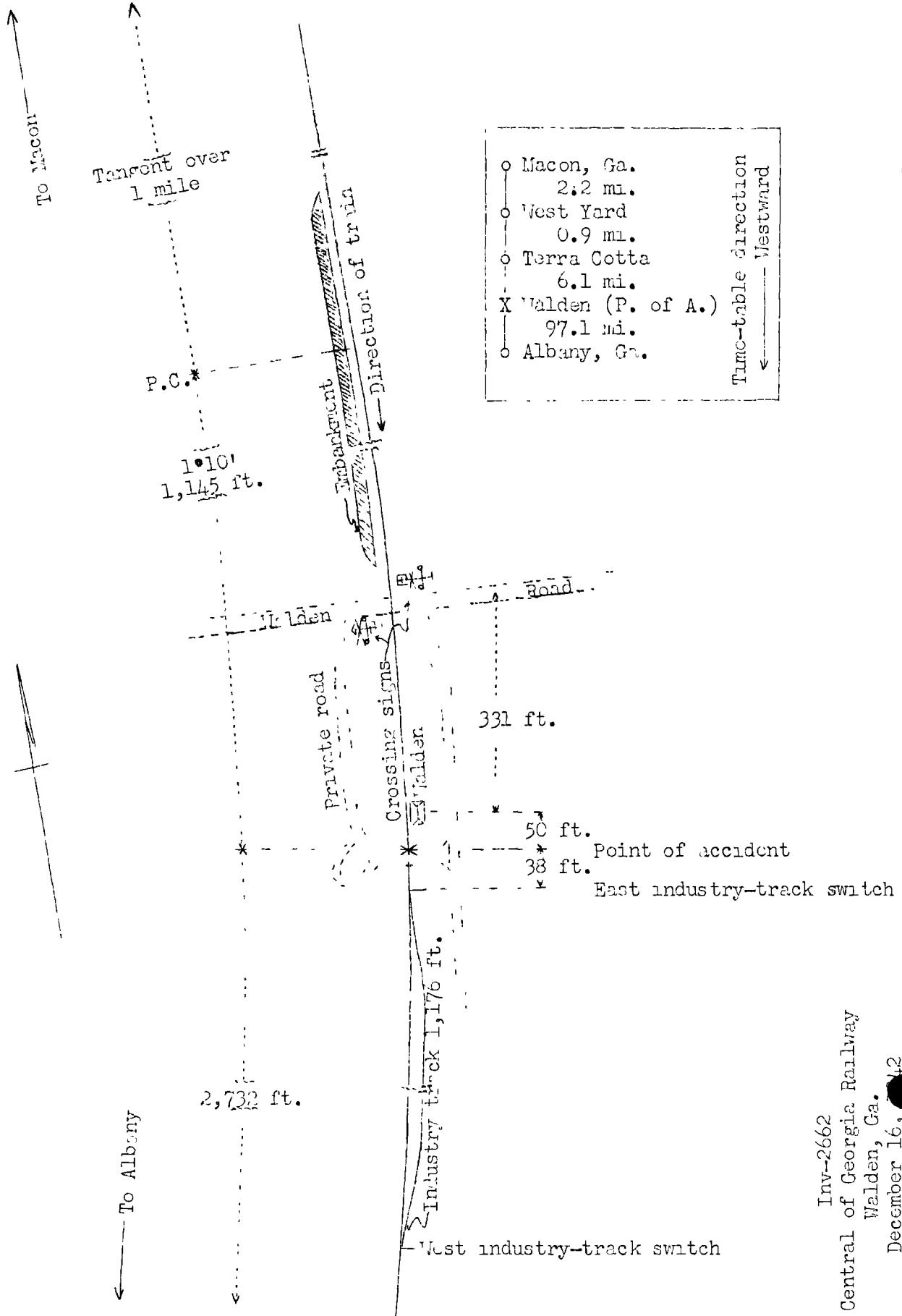
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

PATTERSON, Commissioner:

On December 16, 1942, there was a derailment of a  
passenger train on the Central of Georgia Railway after  
it had struck an automobile at a private-road grade cross-  
ing at Walden, Ga. This accident resulted in the death of  
the automobile driver and two train-service employees, and  
the injury of one train-service employee.

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<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.



o	Macon, Ga.	2.2 mi.
o	West Yard	0.9 mi.
o	Terra Cotta	6.1 mi.
X	Walden (P. of A.)	97.1 mi.
o	Albany, Ga.	

Time-table direction  
↓ Westward

Inv-2662  
 Central of Georgia Railway  
 Walden, Ga.  
 December 16, 1942

Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Macon Division designated as the Albany District and extending between Macon and Albany, Ga., a distance of 106.3 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by signal indications only. Timetable directions, which are east and west, are used in this report. The collision occurred at a private-road grade crossing located 50 feet west of the station at Walden, and the derailment occurred 79 feet west of the station. An industry track 1,175 feet in length parallels the main track on the south. The east and west switches of this track are, respectively, 38 and 1,214 feet west of the center of the crossing involved. Approaching from the east on the railroad there is a tangent more than 1 mile in length, which is followed by a 1°10' curve to the right 1,145 feet to the crossing and 2,732 feet beyond. At the point of accident the grade is level. The private road involved is an unimproved dirt road which crosses the track at right angles. At the crossing the road is 12 feet in width and surfaced with slag and asphalt throughout the width of the track structure. No form of warning to vehicular traffic is provided for this crossing. A public-road grade crossing, protected by electrically operated warning lights and bells, is located 331 feet east of the station at Walden.

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.
* * *	

Bulletin Order No. 31-262, issued June 25, 1931, reads in part as follows:

ALL ENGINEERS:

\* \* \*

2. Disregard Rule 14-L, blowing road crossing whistle signal, and be governed by the following:

"Two long Blasts - One Short Blast - One Long Blast, to continue up to the crossing."

\* \* \*

The maximum authorized speed for passenger trains is 60 miles per hour.

### Description of Accident

No. 33, a west-bound first-class passenger train, consisted of engine 476, of the 4-8-2 type, three express cars, four coaches and five Pullman sleeping cars, in the order named. All cars were of steel construction. At West Yard, 7 miles east of Walden, a terminal air-brake test was made and the brakes functioned properly en route. This train departed from West Yard at 1:19 a. m., according to the dispatcher's record of movement of trains, passed Terra Cotta, 6.1 miles east of Walden and the last open office, at 1:23 a. m., 2 hours 48 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 50 to 55 miles per hour it struck an automobile at a private-road grade crossing and was derailed.

The automobile involved was a 1941 Buick convertible coupe bearing Arkansas license plates 45632, and was owned and being driven by a man who was the sole occupant.

Because of track curvature and the north embankment of a cut, from the right side of a west-bound engine the view of the crossing involved is restricted to a distance of about 500 feet.

The automobile was demolished, and the greater part of its wreckage was thrown to the north of the crossing and a short distance west of the point of impact. Part of the wreckage became lodged under the engine-truck wheels, which were derailed immediately west of the crossing. From this point westward throughout a distance of 1,115 feet to the frog of the west industry-track-switch, flange marks appeared on the ties on both sides of each rail. The general derailment occurred at the frog of this switch, and from this point westward throughout a distance of 239 feet the track was practically destroyed. Engine 476 stopped in reverse direction on its left

side at a point 1,375 feet west of the crossing, north of the main track and parallel to it, and was badly damaged. The tender was detached and stopped on its left side, across the track and about 12 feet west of the engine. The first car stopped across the track, with its front end between the engine and tender, and was badly damaged. The second car stopped diagonally across the track, with its front end against the rear end of the first car, and was considerably damaged. The third car stopped upright, diagonally across the track, with its front end against the rear end of the second car, and was somewhat damaged. The fourth and fifth cars were slightly damaged.

It was clear at the time of the accident, which occurred about 1:35 a. m.

The train-service employees killed were the engineer and the fireman, and the train-service employee injured was the baggage-master.

#### Data

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident, the average daily movement of trains over the crossing involved was 31.06. During the 24-hour period beginning at 6 p. m., December 18, 1942, 5 automobiles passed over this crossing.

According to information furnished by officials of the railroad, the private-road grade crossing involved is maintained for the use of a few residents in going to a store in the vicinity of the station at Walden.

#### Discussion

No. 33 was approaching the crossing involved at a speed of 50 to 55 miles per hour in territory where the maximum authorized speed for passenger trains was 60 miles per hour. Because of track curvature and the embankment east of the road and north of the track, the crossing involved could not be seen by the enginemen a distance greater than about 500 feet. According to the statements of residents in the immediate vicinity, the engine whistle was sounded as No. 33 was approaching the public crossing located 381 feet east of the crossing involved. The evidence indicates that the train brakes were applied just prior to the collision. It is not known when the automobile entered upon the track or when the enginemen first

saw the automobile, as the automobile driver and the enginemen were killed in the accident, and there was no other person in the vicinity who witnessed the accident. The train struck the automobile and the greater part of the wreckage was thrown to the north a short distance west of the crossing. Part of the wreckage became lodged under the front of the engine and the engine-truck wheels were derailed.

The crossing involved is maintained by the railroad to serve residents in the immediate vicinity and is rarely used by other vehicular traffic. Warning signs are not provided and railroad officials state that none was required at private-road grade crossings.

Cause

It is found that this accident was caused by a passenger train striking an automobile at a private-road grade crossing.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this tenth day of February, 1943.

By the Commission, Commissioner Patterson.

(SEAL)

W. P. BARTEL,  
Secretary.