



Locomotive and tender on their side after the 1934 PRR wreck at Linden north of Columbus Ohio. The camera is looking northwest. Photo gleamed from the Northeast Rails web site - <http://www.northeast.railfan.net/>

## TWO ARE KILLED IN LINDEN TRAIN WRECK

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Derailed Coaches of Cleveland Passenger Train Hit Freight Cars

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Open Switch Blamed for Accident at East End of Twenty-fifth Avenue;  
Vandalism reported.

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ROAD FOREMAN AMONG VICTIMS

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H.S. beach, Mt. Vernon, Engineer, Instantly Killed;  
Fireman Is Seriously Injured.

(Columbus Evening Dispatch, December 27, 1934)

Two railroad men were killed and at least 12 persons were injured when a Pennsylvania passenger train went through an open switch in Linden and crashed into a string of freight cars shortly before noon Thursday.

Sabotage was blamed as railroad and police officials immediately began an investigation of the wreck.

Victims were:

Engineer H.E. Beach, Mt Vernon, Ohio.

A.B. Eckels, Cleveland, road foreman for the railroad.

Four passenger cars and a baggage car of the passenger train were derailed and the locomotive was overturned.

Trackage along the right of way was badly torn up and the locomotive and freight cars were a mass of twisted steel.

Preliminary investigation revealed that a switch leading from the main line to a track on which the box cars were situated had been locked "open."

A semaphore arm on the switch, which would have warned Engineer Beach that the track was not clear, had been torn off.

"I was looking out the window of my home," said Joseph Pipersky, 1541 Twenty-Sixth Avenue, witness to the wreck.

"The passenger train was going about 40 miles an hour. I was running south. Apparently there was a switch left open. It headed from the main track onto the siding."

#### **Women Summons Ambulances**

Mrs. George Delaney, 1450 East Twenty-Fifth Avenue, said she heard a terrific crash and rushed from the home to see the locomotive and coaches derailed and in the field.

She said she called police and ambulances.

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Two small boys playing football in a field east of the C.A. & C. tracks, Thursday noon, narrowly escaped injury and at the same time witnessed the wreck of the southbound passenger train when it hit an open switch and careened into a siding of stored box cars.

Bryan Vickers, aged 12, 2056 Cleveland Avenue and Tommy Costello, aged 10, 2006 Cleveland Avenue, were the boys who saw the wreck.

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E.S. Landes of Wooster, secretary of the state office building commission, was a passenger in the rear coach of the train. He was en route to Columbus to attend a meeting of the commission.

"It happened so quickly that I seemed to have been picked up by some force and thrown in the middle of the aisle. Other passengers were the same way. I have only a mark on my shoe. My coach was derailed but it did not overturn. There were seven or eight other passengers in the rear coach," Landes said.

## Mail Clerks Are Bruised

"I was reading a paper in the baggage car," related A.L. Ayres, an America Express Co. employee on the train.

"I felt the train swing and I went flying with the rest of the things in the car." Ayres and two mail clerks in the car, which was the first behind the locomotive suffered only minor bruises.

Noise of the collision could be heard for at least a half-mile, according to Alfred Wolfrey, 1522 East Blake Avenue.

The cars on the siding were empty box cars.

John Steele, 1362 East Twentieth Avenue, employed by the Pennsylvania railroad as an engineer, was "deadheading" on the train.

"I was riding in the head car when the accident happened. It didn't seem so bad up there and I was surprised when I got out and saw the wreckage. It was worse than I had thought. I do not know the cause of the accident but it looks to me as if an open switch might have been the reason," Steele said.

A wreck train started to clear away the debris at 12:50 p.m., while train officials and officials of the Pennsylvania railroad immediately started an investigation to determine the cause of the crash.

Thousands of curious were attracted to the scene of the accident and men from the Columbus Police and fire departments, and the sheriff's office were not sufficient to keep people away from the wreckage.

Police chief Fred Kundts ordered more men detailed to the scene. Many who were held back by police lines on the west side of the tracks went around to the east side along Joyce Avenue and the policed detail had to be split up to handle the two sides.

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# Federal Officials Aid in Train Wreck Probe

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## Death Toll in Linden Tragedy Mounts To Three as fireman Succumbs; Tampered Switch Held Responsible For Derailment of Carrier

(Columbus Evening Dispatch, December 28, 1934)

Interstate Commerce Commission representatives from Washington, D.C., were expected in Columbus, Friday, to aid in the probe of the wreck of the C.A. &C. Pennsylvania railroad passenger train in Linden Thursday noon.

Definite facts supporting a theory that a switch had been deliberately locked open, causing the train to crash into a string of freight cars standing on a siding, were expected to be presented by F.H. Krick, Cleveland division superintendent of the railroad.

Meantime, County Prosecutor Donald Hoskins, Chief of Police, Fred F. Kundts and coroner E.E. Smith were continuing their investigation.

### Death Toll Mounts

Toll of the crash mounted to three, Friday, with the death in University hospital, Thursday night, of John Skolar, aged 41, Cleveland, fireman, whose head and chest were crushed.

Arthur B. Eckles, aged 69, Cleveland road foreman of engines, who was to have been retired within a month, and Engineer H.S. Beach, Mt. Vernon, were the other fatalities. Thirteen passengers were injured, none seriously.

Traffic over the lines was resumed at 5 p.m., Thursday.

Police Photographer Homer Richter reported Friday, that no finger prints were found on the handle of the switch which caused the wreck.

Owen B. Murray, inspector for the state utilities commission, is conducting a third investigation.

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