

# OBITUARY

## GEORGE VANDUZER KILLED

Hackettstown Boy Victim of Careless Train Wreck.

George VanDuzer, son of the late Hirah H. VanDuzer, a young man who was born and grew to manhood in Hackettstown, was killed Monday morning in a railroad accident on the Central Railroad of New Jersey, that seems to have no other explanation than gross carelessness. A switch left open after a freight train had run into a siding caused the wreck of the Atlantic City express, one of the fastest trains on the Central road, at Eatontown Monday morning. Mr. VanDuzer was the only person killed, but a score or more were more or less seriously injured, including the well-known author and Presbyterian minister, Rev. Joseph H. Hatlock, editor of the *Christian Worker*.

The express train was made up of a combination baggage and smoking car, a day couch and two Pullmans. It left Atlantic City at 5:30 a.m. and was due at the Jersey Central terminal at 11:30. The train was filled, a lot of passengers having been picked up at Lakewood, the last stop before the accident.

Just before the express was due at Eatontown an engine and two freight cars pulled on to the siding there to allow the express to pass, as the line has a single track. The rear brakeman of the freight should have gone back and shut the switch, but apparently this was not done. The railroad officials who made an investigation declared positively that the switch had been left open. There is a sharp curve in the track at the station at Eatontown. On account of the switch being on this curve, it is said to be a rule of the road that all

trains shall slow down in taking the curve. According to the passengers on the wrecked train, this was not done and the train was making fifty miles an hour when it took the switch.

Twenty feet beyond the switch there is a swamp over which the main track and the switch run on embankments. As the big camelback locomotive hit the switch it jumped clear of the rails, shot over the ground between the two diverging tracks and plunged into the swamp. It was buried in the mud above the wheels. Edgar Egbert, the engineer, jumped just before the engine made the plunge and escaped unharmed. Robert Hackett, the fireman, was badly hurt internally by being pitched into the tender.

The combination smoker and baggage car took the switch, but was yanked off the track by the engine's leap and fell over on its side in the swamp, part of it resting on the engine. The day couch ran along the main track a short distance and was then pulled off and buried in such a way that one end rested on the switch embankment and the other on the embankment of the main line so that it just spanned the swamp. The two Pullmans took the switch, the first one crashing into the freight train. The end of the Pullman was so smashed that the negro porter had to be chopped out. Nobody on the Pullman was hurt.

It was in the overturned smoker that the worst harm was done. The passengers had just time to get a grip on their seats when the car fell into the swamp and turned over, throwing them all together in a heap in the mud and slime. Possibly this saved many from more serious injuries.