

Edward James Goodwin (- 16 Apr 1934)

Goodwin, Edward J. Suddenly, on Monday, April 16, 1934, at his residence, East Columbia Park, near Landover, Md., Edward J., beloved husband of Bessie Goodwin and son of Edward and Pauline Goodwin. Funeral from the residence of his parents, Cedar st., East Riverdale, Md. Thursday, April 19, at 2 p.m. Relatives and friends invited. Interment Congressional Cemetery.

The Evening Star, April 16, 1934, p. 2

Maryland Man Electrocuted When High Tension Wire Falls 33,000 Volts Passes Through Body as He Throws Switch in Home, Neighbor Misses Like Fate

By a Staff Correspondent of The Star

East Columbia Park, Md., April 16 –

Edward James Goodwin, 26, was electrocuted early today when 33,000 volts from a Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis trolley line, brought into his home over a fallen wire, passed through his body. He was attempting to throw a switch disconnecting the house current.

James L. VanHorn, a neighbor, narrowly escaped a similar fate when he, too, tried to open the master switch in the basement of his home.

Sparks emitting from the electric lights, the radio and other appliances in his home attracted Goodwin's attention when he arose about 6 o'clock this morning. Looking out of the window, he saw the wires which lead into the house had fallen across one of the trolley lines, and a pole supporting them was aflame.

Fearing the short circuit would set fire to his house, Goodwin rushed downstairs, grabbed the switch in the basement, and died instantly.

VanHorn was thrown across the room when he touched the switch in his house, but recovered without serious injury. A wooden flooring which did not make as good a ground connection as the cement basement in Goodwin's house was credited with saving Van Horn's life.

Police were unable to determine what caused the wires to fall across the trolley.

A coroner's jury, impanelled on the scene by Justice of Peace Henry O'Neill, decided Goodwin "came to his death by an electric shock caused by pulling a switch to prevent a fire threatened by a service line falling on the southbound trolley line of the Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Railroad."

Goodwin is survived by a wife and one child. Police identified him as a truck driver.

The Washington Post, April 17, 1934, p. 1

Man Sends Wife, Baby to Safety, Dies Saving Home as Wire Falls

Sending his wife and child to safety, Edward James Goodwin, 26, East Columbia Park, Md., early yesterday died in an attempt to save his home from a fallen electric wire charged with 33,000 volts from a nearby trolley line.

Goodwin, a truck driver, was preparing to leave for work when fire and smoke began to issue from the radio, light sockets, and other electrical apparatus.

Looking through the window, he saw his house current "lead in" wire lying across those of the Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Railroad. An elaborate pyrotechnic display was in progress.

Calling to his wife, Mrs. Virginia Goodwin, and their 4-year-old child to run for their lives, he dashed to the basement to pull the electric switch.

Hearing a moan, Mrs. Goodwin told police, she ran back to the cellar to find her husband prone on the floor. The Bladensburg Rescue Squad was called and worked on him more than an hour. He was pronounced dead by Drs. Oscar Lavine and M.J. Keane.

A neighbor, James L. VanHorn, whose home was the only other on the circuit, was knocked down as he attempted to pull the switch in his cellar. It is believed that the wooden floor saved his life. The Goodwin basement floor is cement.

Various opinions were given as to what caused the wire to fall. Members of the rescue squad said a short circuit set the wooden pole on fire. Others expressed the opinion that high winds might have blown the wire down.

A coroner's jury, impaneled on the scene by Acting Coroner Harry O'Neill, of Bladensburg, came to the conclusion that Goodwin "came to his death by an electric shock caused by pulling a switch to prevent a fire threatened by a service line falling on the southbound trolley line of the Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Railroad."