

2 Drown As Auto Breaks Through Ice At Put-In-Bay

1935 Wives, Son And Another Youth Escape On Return From Dance Across Lake

1935 Feb 20

PUT-IN-BAY, O., Feb. 21—Two fishermen from Middle Bass Island drowned early Sunday when their car broke through the ice only 100 feet from shore, but their wives and two youths escaped.

Dead are Charles Schneider, 47, and John Klacik, 27. Mr. Schneider operated a gill net fishery and Mr. Klacik was a fisherman for Kuemmel Fisheries at Middle Bass.

The men drowned about 4 a.m. when the car in which they were riding with their wives broke through the ice and plunged into about 10 feet of water.

Riding in the car, besides the two victims, were Mrs. Thelma Schneider, 47, and Mrs. Jean Klacik, 27. Following in a second car was Charles Schneider, Jr., 16, a high school student at Sandusky, and Richard Bretz, 20.

Returning From Dance

The two couples and the youths had attended a dance sponsored by the Put-in-Bay volunteer fire department at the Town Hall. About 12 persons from the island attended the dance but two other cars left the dance about midnight.

before the car slid to the bottom and aided the two women to solid ice. Mr. Schneider, a large man, apparently was trapped behind the wheel but Mr. Klacik got out of the car and came to the surface.

Becomes Panicky

The youths said he became panicky and they urged him to remain calm as they tried to help him to solid ice. Twice he broke away, however, and went below the surface.

After several dives to locate Mr. Klacik, the two youths and the women walked to shore and then a mile to their homes. They passed several summer cottages on the way, but none was occupied.

Returning with help, the youths and island residents tried to pull the car ashore but it became caught between several huge boulders on the bottom of the lake and they were afraid that if the car overturned Mr. Schneider's body

Flares and tree branches had been laid out to mark the route from Middle Bass to Put-in-Bay. Island residents

explained that it is a common practice to mark the route to be followed when cars make a journey between the islands in the winter.

The two cars followed the lighted route on the way to Put-in-Bay, but for some unexplained reason Mr. Schneider took another route home when they left Put-in-Bay about 3:30 a.m.

The Schneider car broke through the ice about 100 feet from where Dr. John Edam of Cleveland, his wife and two children drowned Feb. 16, 1940, the last accident of its kind in the Put-in-Bay area.

The two cars, converted Model A Fords, had been especially equipped for ice travel. The back portions of the car had been cut off and the rear was covered with a canvas to keep out the cold.

When the car with the two couples approached Colby Point, it broke through the ice. The two youths, following in the second vehicle, saw it plunge into the lake, and the Bretz youth yelled to the driver "stop or you're going to drive into the open water." They were unable to stop their own car in time, however.

The two youths climbed out

would be lost in the current.

Both Bodies Recovered

The top of the car was finally broken loose and Mr. Schneider

was removed about 7 a.m. yesterday. Meanwhile another search party, including Mayor William McCann of Put-in-Bay and Edward Brennan were dragging the car and about noon located Mr. Klacik's body wedged between two boulders.

Island residents said that 10 days ago a new truck being driven by Mr. Schneider near Sugar Island broke through the ice but it was hauled to the surface with extensive damage.

Surviving Mr. Schneider is his wife, Thelma; daughter, Mary Ann, a student at Kent State University; son, Charles, Jr., and mother, Mrs. Amanda Schneider.

Services will be Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the Andres Mortuary, Sandusky. Burial will be Wednesday at Middle Bass.

Mr. Klacik is survived by wife, Jean, and daughters, Mary Ann, Linda, Sharon and Paula. The body is in the Gerner & Wolf Mortuary, Port Clinton.

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