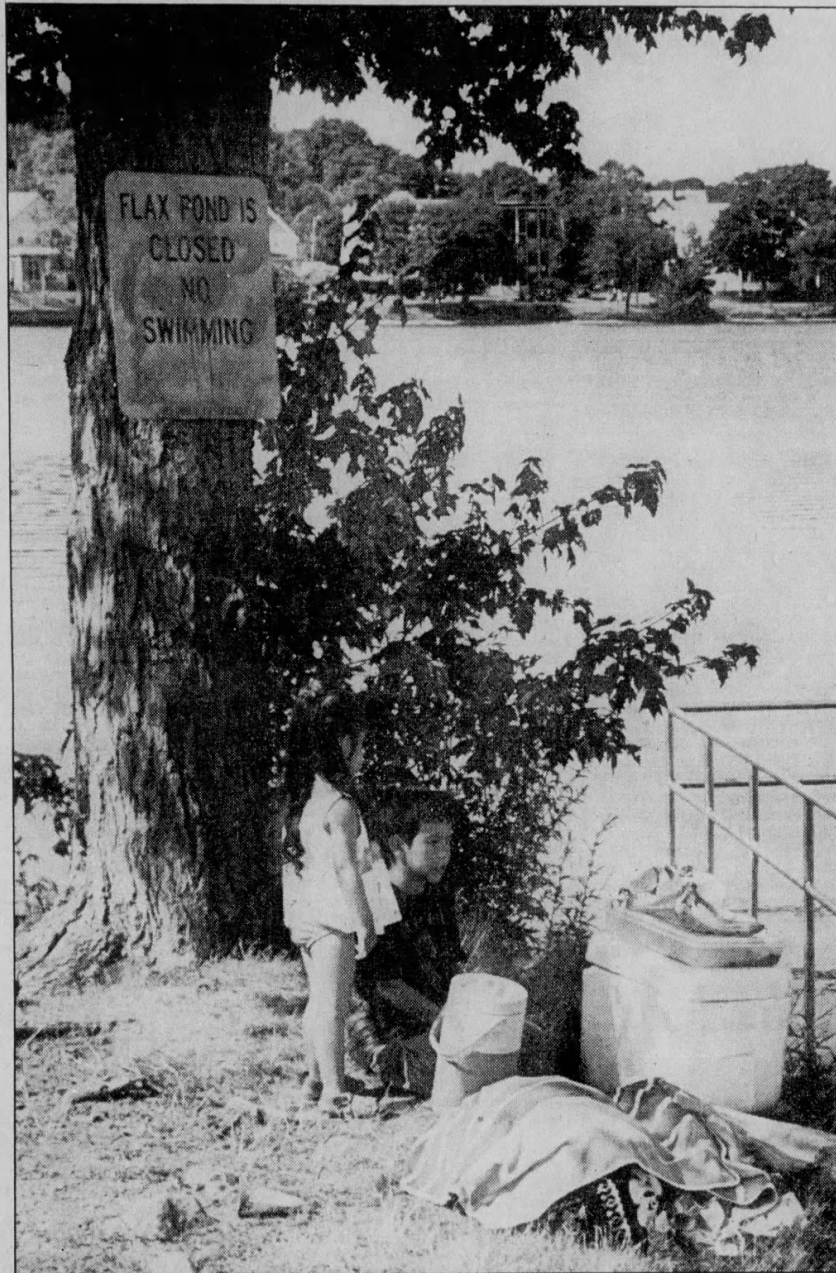


Swimmers drown in Lynn, Peabody



Two children play near a tree at Lynn's Flax Pond Monday near the scene where Scarlett Diaz, 15, drowned. Visible on the tree is a no swimming sign.

Item photo: Linda Spillane-Keady

The Fourth of July weekend ended on a tragic note Monday with drowning deaths in Lynn and Peabody.

In Lynn, 15-year-old Scarlett Diaz drowned yesterday afternoon at Flax Pond while swimming with friends during a family picnic.

Donald Sisson, 27, drowned in Peabody's Bartholomew Pond, a quarry, around 6 p.m. Monday apparently after diving from a boat.

In the Lynn incident, Diaz, 11 Mansfield Place, was swimming across from the old Coca-Cola plant with two friends. They were about 20 feet from shore with her mother watching from shore.

When the three girls tired around 3:30 p.m. and headed for land, only one made it back, according to police spokesman Lt. Robert Carter.

Diaz's distraught mother, Carmen Diaz, reportedly said, "There was no one to help," sobbing as she alternated between English and Spanish. "Too much, too much."

"No swimming" signs were posted at the pond and no lifeguard was on duty when the girls went swimming, Lt. Carter noted. That area, however, is used as a swimming area during the summer.

One of her swimming companions, Pamela Brea, 498 Essex St., Lynn, made it safely back to shore. Michael Bourcher, 21, 119 Western Ave., Lynn, told police he saw the other two girls struggling in the water.

Although he could not swim, Bourcher said he waded out into the shallow part of the pond and reached 15-year-old Jennifer Brea, 498 Essex St., Lynn, just as she lost consciousness. Bourcher carried the girl back to shore, where he and another man performed first aid on her.

Diaz, however, had slipped beneath the surface of the water. Lynn Police Patrolmen Michael Lee, Lawrence Wentzell and Donald Kasle, the first officers on the scene, swam in and looked for her in the murky waters without success.

Firefighter Gary Powers joined them and finally located the girl in eight feet of water, nearly 30 feet from shore. He and the three police officers were able to get her to land and start cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. The girl was taken to Union Hospital where she was

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pronounced dead on arrival.

"From what I understand, they were at Flax Pond with their families for a picnic outing," said District Fire Chief James Barry. "They got in the water over their heads."

The other rescued teen-ager, Jennifer Brea, also was taken to Union Hospital, where she was listed in good condition this morning.

Scarlett Diaz, the daughter of Victor Aprio and Carmen Cedano, was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and came to the United States four years ago, settling in Lynn. A graduate of Eastern Junior High, she was about to enter her junior year at English High.

She leaves a sister, Yohara "Cappie" Diaz, and three brothers, Robert Diaz, Ramon Cedano and Alexander Cedano, all of Lynn; her grandparents, Isabel Reino and Miguel Diaz, of the Dominican Republic; several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and are being made by the St. Laurent Funeral Home, 554 Western Ave., Lynn.

Further north in Peabody, Sisson, 2 Piedmont Road, Peabody, drowned about 6 p.m. yesterday while swimming near his home in the quarry known as Bartholomew Pond, police said.

Police were told that Sisson was canoeing with friends, dove in for a swim, and disappeared. Sisson's body was found minutes later by neighbors who rowed a boat out to the scene. He was pronounced dead about 40 minutes later at Union Hospital.

Bartholomew Pond is bordered by cliffs on one side and houses on the other sides, making it difficult to reach, police said.

Sisson was the son of Carl L. Sisson of Lynn and Ellen McWha, also of Lynn, and the stepson of Donald H. Cormier of Lynn. He also leaves a stepsister, Michelle Cormier.

He was the brother of the late David K. Sisson.

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