

W. Reading Boy Dives To Death

Drowns In Quarry In Lehigh County

Elwood Stettler, 17, son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Stettler, 129 Franklin st., West Reading, drowned at 10:30 o'clock yesterday morning while he and two companions were swimming in an abandoned, water-filled quarry at Ormrod, six miles north of Allentown.

The youth's body was recovered by a rescue party with grappling hooks at 3:15 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

The Stettler family was spending the weekend at the home of the boy's grandmother, Mrs. Lillian Stettler, Coplay, R. D. 1. When one of the boy's companions came running with the news that Elwood had not come to the surface after taking his second dive of the morning's dip, the father and an uncle, Harold Stettler, raced the three blocks between the Stettler home and the quarry.

The father shed most of his clothes as he ran and when he got to the swimming hole had to be restrained forcibly from a headlong dive into the water to find his son.

William Muntz, superintendent of the Lehigh Portland Cement Company, which owns the quarry but abandoned it about 10 years ago, called state and local police and grappling hooks were put into use within 45 minutes after the boy went down.

125 Feet Deep

Employees of the company tried grappling before police got there and assisted them until the body was located, at 3:15 p. m., about 50 feet from the shore. The quarry is 125 feet deep.

Lewis Steckel, Fred Agats, Willard Guth, William and Sydney Ruch, and Joseph Kern, all cement company employes, helped State Troopers Adrian J. McCarr and Peter Greblunas of the Bethlehem barracks of the Pennsylvania Motor Police.

Grappling hooks first were used from the shore. Then the Ruchs went to Dorney Park, an amusement center west of Allentown, for a boat. With Kern wielding the hooks and Steckel at the oars, the body finally was recovered. Coroner Alexander M. Peters, of Lehigh County, issued a certificate of death by drowning.

Young Stettler's companions were Clifford Roth, 15, and his cousin, Stanley Roth, 17, who live near Mrs. Stettler's home.

Clifford was first into the quarry, about 10:30 a. m. yesterday. Stettler then dived in and came out to take another dive, the younger Roth boy

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told police. On his second dive he failed to come to the surface. Clifford said he thought young Stettler was "fooling" and was not concerned for a minute or two. Then he realized something might be wrong and dived in after Stettler. He saw the body sinking to the bottom of the quarry, he told police, but was unable to reach it.

He swam to shore and immediately ran to the Stettler home to give the alarm. The boy's father and uncle and Mr. and Mrs. James Trautman, 154 Penn ave., West Reading, ran to the quarry and remained there throughout the rescue attempts.

Assisting company employes and state police in the prolonged effort to locate the body were Leroy W. Fahringer, chief of police of Hoken-dauqua, and Howard Zerfass, chief of police of Egypt.

Graduated in 1937

The drowned boy was said to have been an excellent swimmer and his companions told police he had won several swimming contests at the Central Y. M. C. A. in Reading. He was graduated from the Reading High School in 1937. He was a foreman for the New York Iron and Steel Company at Lobachsville, where his father is plant superintendent.

Young Stettler was born in Hoffmansville, South Whitehall Township, Lehigh County, on July 3, 1921. He moved to Reading with his family in 1925. He is survived by his grandmother, his mother, his father, a sister, Jean, at home; a stepbrother, Russell Deahrs, and a step-sister, Mrs. Martin Lichtenwalter, Maxatawny.

Burial will be in the Jordan Church Cemetery, Walberts, Lehigh County, in charge of Walter Bard, Schnecksville undertaker. No date for the funeral had been set last night.

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