

## Man And Niece Drown In Quarry Hole Near Barre

Double Tragedy Strikes  
Home in Websterville—  
Girl Only Nine Years Old

BARRE, July 11, (Special) — A double tragedy struck the home of Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm MacRitchie of lower Websterville Saturday afternoon when their nine-year-old daughter, Jane Mina, and her uncle, William MacRitchie, 58, drowned in an abandoned quarry hole near the home.

MacRitchie, who lived with his brother, Malcolm, left the house Saturday afternoon with Jane and her sister, Anne, aged 6 years, to go to the Ahern quarry hole, only a couple minutes' walk away, for a swim. They had often gone swimming together previously. MacRitchie was considered a very good swimmer, and Jane, who was learning, could swim a little.

Exactly what happened at the quarry hole is uncertain, there being several contradictory stories about the details. One story is that the uncle was teaching Jane how to swim and suffered cramps with the result that both of them went below the surface. Another story is that the little girl was hanging onto her uncle's back when he suffered cramps. The water where the two drowned was said to be about six feet deep although it is some 30 feet deep in places.

First word of the double drownings was carried home by six-year-old Anne who told her mother. Mrs. MacRitchie hurried to the home of Dan Beaton, a next-door neighbor, for help. A telephone call was made to the Barre fire department for their inhalator. On her way Mrs. MacRitchie stopped Paul Bagallo, foreman at Wells-Lamson quarry, who was driving past and informed him of what had happened. Bagallo went to the quarry hole and dove for the two bodies. He brought them both out of the water.

The No. 2 truck of the local fire department with Assistant Fire Chief Gordon Thow and Fireman Joseph Chouinard answered the summons, taking with them the inhalator. A few minutes after they were at the scene they telephoned the station for a reserve oxygen tank which was taken to Websterville by Fire Chief Roy MacDonald and Fireman Albert Galfetti.

The firemen labored about three-quarters of an hour on MacRitchie, and about an hour and a half on the little girl. With the two connections on the inhalator they were able to work on both victims at the same time. However, the two victims had been in the water for some time before being taken out and resuscitation efforts were fruitless.

1944 Jul child and uncle drown at quarry  
VT

Clipped By:  
usmra\_rob  
Dec 29, 2024

## QUARRY TRAGEDY TAKES TWO LIVES

### Child and Uncle Drown In Websterville Quarry

An abandoned quarry tragedy, the first of the summer season, took a toll of two lives Saturday afternoon when William MacRitchie, a quarrier, and his little niece, Jane MacRitchie, were drowned while swimming at the dismantled Bob O'Hearn quarry in Websterville. Emergency services of Barre doctors, nurses and the Barre fire department inhalator equipment failed to revive the victims.

The abandoned Bob O'Hearn quarry with its shaded pool of green water has long been a popular swimming spot for nearby residents during the hot summer days. The child and her uncle, accompanied by two children, one of them the sister of the drowned child, started out for the quarry at 4 o'clock. The child, Jane, was a poor swimmer and it is reported that her uncle accompanied her for protection.

When the uncle and child disappeared from view below the water, one of the accompanying children who had been sunning herself on a ledge, ran in frantic haste to her home to notify her parents of the accident.

The parents, with neighbors, rushed to the scene, and a few minutes later Drs. William McFarland and Michael Cerasoli of Barre, arrived. The doctors with the assistance of three Barre nurses, Edna Crocane, Helen Ferris and Lorraine Butler, attempted futilely to revive the two victims by means of artificial respiration. The inhalator of the Barre fire department was also employed to no effect. The doctors pronounced the man and child dead. The bodies were removed to the Whitcomb Funeral Home in East Barre.

William MacRitchie was born in Scotland and came to this country when a young man settling in Websterville to make his home with his brother, Malcolm. He was a quarrier, employed by the Wells-Lamson Company, and was a Legionnaire, a veteran of World War II.

Jane MacRitchie was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm MacRitchie of Lower Westerville, and a student in the 4th grade of the public schools. Besides her parents, she is survived by two brothers, John and Gordon, and two sisters, Ruth and Annie; grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Angus MacEwing of Websterville, and several aunts, uncles and cousins.

The double funeral will be held at 2 o'clock at the Presbyterian church in lower Websterville.

1944 Jul child and uncle drown at quarry  
VT

Clipped By:  
usmra\_rob  
Dec 29, 2024