

Garreth Billingsly Steps From Ledge Into Deep Water

Garreth Billingsly, 16-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Billingsly of Hillsboro, drowned in the stone quarry pit located seven miles southeast of Mt. Pleasant Sunday at 4:25 p. m.

His body was recovered by Joe Strang of Mt. Pleasant about 6:30 p. m. and taken to the Crane Funeral Home here and then to the Stevens Funeral Home in Salem where funeral services are pending.

Billingsly went to the deep quarry pit to swim with the Leo Pross children, his sister, Barbara, 14, and Harold Saeger, 19, of Burlington. Not being a good swimmer, Billingsly was standing on a ledge on the northwest corner of the quarry with the water up to his waist.

Steps Off Ledge

Leota Pross, 13, said he stepped off the ledge and went down in 14 feet of water, came up once, struggled but didn't yell and then went under again. She, Tommy Pross, 11, and the Billingsly girl were the only persons of the many at the quarry to witness the tragedy.

They quickly told the other youths there about it and several started diving for Garreth but had no success. Police Chief James Jamison said the police station was notified at 4:35 p. m. and he and Officer Webb Yocum hurried to the scene. Deputy Sheriff Russell Van Tuyl and two highway patrolmen were also summoned.

Gets Boat

When the police got to the quarry they met Joe Strang and told him what happened and that a boat was needed to drag the pond for the youth. Strang's son, Frank, went back to Mt. Pleasant and came back with a boat in about 30 minutes.

Strang and his son started dragging the pond with grappling hooks and were joined by Darrell Goddard and Leo Pross in another boat. Strang recovered the body at the spot where the mishap occurred.

The police had a resuscitator with them but it wasn't used since Billingsly was dead when pulled

from the water. County Coroner Hugh Dallner said that no inquest will be held.

The quarry and the area surrounding it is under lease to the Concrete Materials Co. of Cedar Rapids and is part of the Bartlett farm. The quarry has not been worked for some time.

Dangerous Place

Frequent warnings have been given about the danger of swimming in the quarry pit. The hole is very deep—40 feet or more at the deepest point—with some treacherous drop-offs.

A few months ago, the News gave the opinions of several persons regarding the use of the pit by young people as a swimming hole. One of the persons said at that time in effect that nothing would be done until someone drowns.

Only last week, Jim Rose in his column in the News again pointed out the danger of using the pit and called attention to the need for a swimming pool in Mt. Pleasant.

Sunday afternoon when the drowning occurred at the pit, about 16 were swimming there, according to the report.

Temperature Up To 92 Degrees

"Corn weather" that was doing much for southeastern Iowa corn fields Sunday caused residents to seek refuge in shady spots and at swimming pools.

The temperature was up to 92 in Mt. Pleasant for a high for the season to date and followed a night of good corn-growing temperatures that dropped only to a low of 74. Early Monday morning cooler temperatures blew in and the temperature went down to 61. At one o'clock Monday afternoon, the temperature was 83.

Many persons from Mt. Pleasant and over the county enjoyed the swimming pool at Burlington in the afternoon or early evening.