

Youth Drowns In Abandoned Swimming Hole

Companions' Rescue
Attempts Futile
In Deep Quarry Pit

A 17-year-old Upper Darby youth, the only boy in a family of eight children drowned yesterday while swimming in the old abandoned kaolin quarry of Heyburn rd. in Birmingham township, two miles from Chadds Ford.

The victim was Thomas Atkins, of 125 Chatham rd., Upper Darby, son of Mrs. Thomas Atkins of that address. He was a student at John Bartram High School, living with an aunt in Philadelphia while attending classes there.

Three other boys who went swimming in the waterhole with him said Atkins, who was not a good swimmer, dived into the 175-foot-deep water and landed on his stomach. Stunned and apparently panic-stricken, he fought off their efforts to help him, until he sank.

SECOND VICTIM IN YEAR

Atkins was the second person to drown in the quarry within a year. A serviceman died last August under similar circumstances in the water-filled pit, which is a mile long and 75 yards wide. The quarry, from which kaolin, a type of clay used in making pottery, was extracted for many years, was abandoned about 35 years ago after the operators struck an underground river in the deepest part.

Joseph White, 17, of 6939 Chester ave., Philadelphia, one of Atkins' companions who was already in the water, saw the victim was in trouble and swam to his assistance, but the frantic youth grappled with him and tried to pull him under. White was forced to break away and get out of reach.

ATTEMPT RESCUE

Raymond Hause, 17, of 2613 Massey st., Philadelphia, and Jack Wisgo, 17, of 8021 Harley ave., Philadelphia, the other two youths with him, also dived to the rescue and encountered the same difficulty. They retreated to the shore, and by the time they had caught their breaths, Atkins had disappeared.

The three went to the nearby farmhouse of Mrs. Rose DeMedio, who telephoned Concordville police. The latter notified State Police of the Media barracks and the Franklin Rescue Squad of Chester. Sgt. Francis X. Kelly and Troopers Earl Glasser and Morris Todak of the State Police responded, and directed rescue operations.

John Degville and Elmer Wiegand of the Franklin Rescue Squad, after he had disappeared. He was grappling from a lifeboat, pulled Atkins' body to the surface an hour pronounced dead by Dr. William G. Best of Concordville.

1952 Jun two youths drown in Kaolin
quarry PA

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