

School Holiday Turns to Tragedy For Youngster

A 10-year-old boy from Upper Merion township drowned yesterday in about 10 feet of water in an abandoned marble quarry near Croton rd. and Montgomery pike, a mile from his home, while playing with a younger brother and a neighbor boy.

The victim of the latest of Pennsylvania's quarry drownings was James Sutton, of Church rd., Upper Merion township, Montgomery county. He apparently slipped from a huge boulder on which he was playing with his brother, Arnold, 7, and Hugh Biddy, 15, of Croton rd.

SCHOOL HOLIDAY

The youths had descended a steep embankment of the quarry to reach the water's edge while enjoying a holiday from school as their teachers were attending sessions of Schoolmen's Week at the University of Pennsylvania. Police Chief John Boyle, of Upper Merion township, said there was no fence or other barrier around the water filled excavation.

The drowning was one more in a series of tragedies experienced by the boy's mother, Mrs. Pearl Sutton, who less than two years ago found her husband, Albert, lying near their home with two bullet wounds. He died June 6, 1952, in Montgomery Hospital, Norristown.

HOME DESTROYED

Five years ago the Sutton family, which then included James and his mother and father and seven brothers and sisters, was made homeless when their house burned to the ground and all their possessions were destroyed.

Yesterday, Mrs. Sutton stood tense and nervous—but quietly—for more than four hours on the rim of the death pit while grapplers and divers searched for the body of her young son. She was still there, surrounded by four of her five surviving children, when James' body was lifted from the water at 2:40 P. M.

BOY RUNS HOME

The 43 - year - old mother was tending to her housework before preparing to leave for her nurses aide job at Bryn Mawr Hospital when her youngest son, Arnold, ran home about 10:30 A. M. shouting that James had drowned in the quarry.

A brother of Hugh Biddy, the Sutton boys' companion yesterday, died in the same quarry eight years ago this month. Gerald Biddy, 5, fell 125 feet from a rock ledge on April 22, 1946, when he lost his balance while tossing pebbles into the deep water.

IN FOURTH GRADE

James was a fourth-grade student at the Upper Merion Elementary School. Neither of his companions actually saw him tumble from the boulder on which they were playing. Suddenly, according to their account to Chief Boyl, they heard water splashing and saw James floundering in the water. He yelled for help, they said, and then disappeared under the water's surface. He could not swim.

James is survived by two other brothers, John, 21, and Fred, 15, and two sisters, Jean, 16, and Irene, 13. All except John joined their mother in the long quarry-side vigil.

1954 Apr James Sutton drowns at quarry
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