

Body Found in 30 Feet of Water

Leon Erby, 14,
Attempted to Swim
the Width of Pit

By DON MORRISSEY

Unauthorized swimming at the abandoned Mock stone quarry off East Jackson Street near the east city limits resulted in the drowning of a 14-year-old boy shortly after 4 p.m. Wednesday.

The body of Leon Erby, 1614 E. Dudley Ave., was recovered in about 30 feet of water by Rodney Ebrite, Yorktown, a member of the Scuba Club, and Fire Capt. Clarence (Bud) Cook at 7:20 p.m. The boy was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Erby.

Using their own equipment and Civilian Defense equipment, the Scuba Club members and fire department personnel strung a rope from one shore to the other and worked along it to carefully cover the entire bottom of the quarry. After a shore-to-shore search was completed the rope was moved to a new position.

The men wore "frogmen" suits to ward off the extremely cold water.

CD Director Marshall Sipe, Police Capt. John Conn, and Deputy Fire Chief Aaron Belcher had full crews of police, firemen and rescue workers on hand as well as portable equipment for lighting the scene if necessary. Operations at the scene were directed by Belcher.

Police and spectators had high praise for the Scuba Club members and firemen who worked tirelessly for several hours until the boy's body was located. (Scuba stands for self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.)

Besides the CD rescue boat another furnished by the Irving Marina was manned by CD personnel. Also at the scene was the No. 1 squad wagon from Central Fire Station which brought out rescue equipment and the resuscitator, and the CD rescue wagon.

The coroner was notified as soon as the body was located. No attempt was made to give artificial respiration as the body had been in the water for more than three hours.

The boy went down while trying to swim from the east to west shore of the treacherous, spring-fed quarry, which has been closed to the public for years.

The boy's companion, Harvey Buchanan, 17, 1611 E. Dudley Ave., who lives across the street, narrowly escaped drowning while attempting to rescue his friend.

Buchanan said he and about 20 other youths were swimming at the quarry. He said Erby started to swim across to the other shore after he had warned him not to try it.

"I started out after him," Buchanan said, "and was not far in back of him when he yelled, 'help me, I'm tired.'"

"As soon as I got close to him he grabbed me around the neck and pulled me down about 20 feet. I struggled to the surface and grabbed at him again. This time we went down about 30 feet. I got my feet under him and

Turn to Page 2, Column 4

1960 Jun Leon Erby drowns at quarry IN

Clipped By:
usmra_rob
Dec 6, 2024

Body Found

Continued From Page One

pushed him up. He went about 10 feet toward the shore. He grabbed at me again and dragged me even further under.

"I thought I was going to drown and felt too weakened to be of any more help. I swam back to the east shore, got my clothing and got a ride to his home to tell his folks and then came back here."

Buchanan said he thought they were about 50 feet from the west shore line when Erby started to weaken.

1960 Jun Leon Erby drowns at quarry IN

Clipped By:
usmra_rob
Dec 6, 2024