

Van Wert Daily Bulletin, Van Wert County, Ohio; Monday, July 11, 1932

TWO DROWNED

Well Known Residents of Decatur Victims of Tragedy in Waters of Sand Pit

Richard A. Harker, of Decatur, Indiana, who was an uncle of Mrs. Paul Oechsle, of East Crawford Street, Van Wert, was drowned late Sunday afternoon, while performing an act of heroism in a sand pit on the Jay Cline farm, two and one-half miles west of Decatur. A party of residents of Decatur, including Mrs. Lucy Johnson, were at the pit and Mrs. Johnson, who accidentally got into deep water, after a step-off, called for assistance. Mr. Harker went to her rescue, but both sunk. Other members of the party succeeded in bringing the body of Mrs. Johnson to shore, but she died while an effort at resuscitation was in progress. The body of Mr. Harker was later found and brought to shore by expert swimmers of that district. The fire department at Decatur dispatched a pulmotor to the scene to assist in the efforts to revive the victims of the tragedy. Coroner J. C. Grandstaff conducted an inquest and made a finding of accidental deaths.

Mrs. Johnson is survived by seven children, who reside in Decatur, and her father, Lawrence Beitler, of Monroe. Among Mr. Harker's direct survivors are a daughter, Mrs. Earl Miller, of Fort Wayne, and two sons, Raymond Harker of Kalamazoo, Michigan and Ersal Harker of the United States Army, and three sisters, Mrs. Amanda Gephart and Mrs. Richard Stevens of near Wren, Van Wert County, and Mrs. Stella Mitch of Decatur. The funeral of Mr. Harker will be held Wednesday afternoon, in the United Brethren Church, of which he was a member, with interment at Decatur. Mr. Harker formerly lived in Harrison township, Van Wert County, Ohio.