

(Handwritten date: Wednesday, April 10, 1940)

Robert Harman Instantly Killed This Morning at Mutschler Packing Plant In This City ONLY 110 VOLTS

Robert Harman, 18, former Pleasant Mills high school basketball star, was electrocuted this morning about 7:30 o'clock while working at the Fred Mutschler Packing Co., here.

It was his second day in the employ of the firm, Edgar Mutschler, company manager stated. He had gone to work at the packing company for the first time Tuesday morning.

Dr. G. J. Kohne, who was summoned stated that Harmon was dead when he reached the Adams county memorial hospital, where he had been taken by fellow employes.

The doctor and Coroner J. Jerome Yager of Berne, who was also summoned, expressed the belief that the lad died almost instantly as his hand came in contact with an electric wire.

ONLY 110 VOLTS

Fellow workers and plant leaders were amazed when they learned that Harman was dead. The line which he had evidently touched carried only 110 volts, they said - the same voltage as is carried in an ordinary home electric line.

In reconstructing the accident, Ben Schroyer, maintenance foreman of the plant, stated that Harman was working in the hide room, replacing a broken light bulb. While no one saw him crawl partly up on a stack of hides to tighten the bulb, a number of workmen were nearby. When one of them noticed him fall from the stack they went to his aid. Thinking he was seriously ill or injured, they took him to the hospital.

At the hospital, examination revealed that his left hand was burned in several places and the ball of his left foot gave evidence of a burn.

The wet floor in that department of the plant, the fact that his shoes had long nails entirely through the soles, and that the soles were soaked, were believed to have resulted in heavier charge passing through his body and causing a firmer contact for the charge.

FATHER IN PLANT

The lad's father, A. L. "Dick" Harman, a veteran fireman at the packing company, was working in another part of the plant at the time of the accident. When first informed of his son's death by workmen he believed that they were joking. His mother and other members of the family were notified shortly after.

Harman was well known in this community. He was graduated from Pleasant Mills high school last year after playing for three years on the basketball team there. A brother, Richard, was a member of this year's sectional basketball champions.

The Harman family resides southeast of Pleasant Mills near the Indiana-Ohio state line.

Coroner Yager remained in the city throughout most of the day continuing his investigation of the accident, by contacting employes and plant leaders. The line with which the boy is believed to have come in contact was not impaired. Workers, after an examination of the wires, were at a loss to explain how the charge had been transferred to the boy's body.

Harman was born in St. Mary's Township, December 12, 1921, the son of Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Harman. He was a member of the Liberal U.B. church near Willshire, Ohio.

He was educated in the Pleasant (cut off)

Surviving besides the parents, are a brother, Donald, a student at Pleasant Mills, and a sister, Betty.

Funeral arrangements were not expected to be completed today. His body was taken to the Zwick funeral home in this city. It will be taken to the Harman residence one mile west of Willshire on state road 124 late this evening and may be viewed there after tomorrow morning until time for the funeral.

Adams County Historical Museum

1940 Feb-Dec Scrapbook - image 069-070

Transcribed by Karin King

(Handwritten date: Thursday, April 11, 1940)

FUNERAL RITES SET

(Photo of Robert Harman) Funeral services for Robert Harman, 18, who was electrocuted Wednesday when he came in contact with electric lines at the Mutschler Packing Plant at Decatur, will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Harman, one mile west of Willshire, O., and at 1:30 p.m. at the Liberal U.B. church near Willshire.

An investigation by County Coroner J. Jerome Yager and other employees of the packing plant failed to establish the exact manner in which Harman received the electric charge. Harman had crawled onto a pile of damp beef hides to replace a broken electric light bulb.

He had been taking post graduate work at the Pleasant Mills High School this year and also was attending a business college in Fort Wayne.

Besides the parents, survivors are a brother, Donald, and a sister, Betty. The body will be at the parents home until the funeral.

Adams County Historical Museum

1940 Feb-Dec Scrapbook - image 077

Transcribed by Karin King

(Handwritten date: Wed., April 17, 1940)

OBITUARY

Tribute to Robert Harmon

On December 12, 1921 in Van Wert County, Ohio, there came to brighten the home of A. L. and ?rgie Harmon, their first son, Robert, and God permitted him to remain here 18 years, 3 months, ? days, so in the years, just eighteen there has been.

Robert didn't live to let the future make a man of him, but lived ??man each day.

The unselfish devotion and loyalty to your family alone was much, and your service of love has helped and encouraged your companions along the way. To them you were an honest and trusted friend.

Not one of your companions ever felt or saw or heard a lofty air, an ugly frown or an unkind word. Was content to be among them and to be happy when they were happy.

The older folks had learned to respect and admire your manly principles.

Somewhere up there, we think we hear a voice in song. Then we, with a listening ear, just for an instant, pause and then we to ourselves say, "That is Bob."

It can truly be said that your life has been a real influence to all whom you have ever chanced to meet.

Yes, Bob you have crossed the great divide and the way seems long and the path wide, but there is much you have left on this side.

Your life is an example to all and has been a guiding light that no one needs to fall. Thus a life for humanity. And though your face no more we'll see and you never present be.

We'll strive to live, that sometime, somewhere we may live again with you.

Robert was a graduate of the Pleasant Mills high school in the class of 1939. He was interested in clean recreation and was a star player on the basketball team during his school year.

He will not only be missed in the home, but by his wide circle of friends, both old and young. He leaves to mourn his untimely departure to the Great Beyond, a loving father and mother, one brother Donald, one sister Betty, also friend Dorothy Huffman, and a host of other relatives and friends.

CARD OF THANKS

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the many friends and neighbors who so kindly assisted us in any way during the sad hour, also for the beautiful tributes.

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Harmon, Donald and Betty.

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