

Wednesday, April 14, 1943

Infirmary Inmate Commits Suicide John Durbin Takes Life By Hanging

The fear of moving to a strange home is blamed for the suicide early this morning of John T. Durbin, 81, blind resident of the county infirmary.

The lifeless body was found hanging from a rope thrown over a radiator pipe in his single room at the former country club building at 5:20 am by Sam Reinhart, Infirmery Superintendent.

A few hours later, Durbin and the other inmates were to be moved to their new \$100,000 home, recently completed to replace the old infirmary destroyed by fire in August, 1941.

Superintendent Reinhart and other inmates told coroner Robert J. Zwick, who investigated, that Durbin had often said he would take his own life rather than move from the familiar surroundings of the country club building, which has been serving as an infirmary. Before he retired last night, Durbin reiterated his statement and asserted that "this is the last time you'll talk to me."

Coroner Zwick placed the time of death about 2:30 or 3 o'clock. Durbin, despite his total blindness, had managed in some manner to smuggle a rope into his room. He threw the rope over the radiator pipe, tied a loop around his neck and stepped off the bed. His feet were touching the floor when he was found. Death was caused by strangulation.

Durbin had been confined in the infirmary since becoming blind about two years ago. He was born in Monroe Township on May 20, 1861 and was never married. He was the last of his family and was a member of the Pleasant Valley Friends Church.

Only near survivors are two nieces, Mrs. Ora Mitchell and Mrs. Henry Cook of Decatur, and a nephew, O. H. Durbin of Watervliet, Mich.

The body will be removed to the Mitchell residence from the Zwick Funeral Home Thursday evening and may be viewed there until time for the services.

Friday, April 16, 1943

BIRTHS

Ada is the name of the baby girl born last evening to John E. and Elma Troyer Wickey in Wabash Township.

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Stiggers of Bluffton are the parents of another boy since Tuesday named Dickie Allen. This is their second son and child. Mr. Stiggers is a finisher at Dunbar Furniture Manufacturing Company since the past year.

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S/Sgt. and Mrs. P. J. Newman of 937 No. 51st St., Birmingham, Alabama, are the parents of a baby girl, Theresa Sharon, born on April 8. The baby's father is serving as a parachutist with the U.S. Army and will be remembered here as Peter Neuenschwander, son of Chris Neuenschwander, northeast of Berne and also a grandson of the late Peter Eicher.

Dr. Charles and Frances Hirschy Entner are the parents of a baby boy born at Indianapolis on Sunday night. Dr. Entner and family recently returned from Africa where they were engaged in missionary work and are now residing with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Hirschy in that city.

A baby girl, Iris Teresa, was born to Orval and Vera Swoveland Jones on Tuesday morning at their home in Monroe Township.

Lowell and Nellie Jones Sprunger are the parents of a baby boy, Michael Rae, born at the Hossman Hospital early last evening.

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Sprunger-Steiner Nuptials Tonight

Emma Jane Sprunger and Cpl. Willard Steiner Wed at 7:00 pm

In an informal ceremony to be solemnized at 7 o'clock this evening, Miss Emma Jane Sprunger, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sylvan Sprunger, will become the bride of Corporal Willard Steiner, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elam Steiner. An impressive double ring ceremony will be read by Dr. C. H. Suckau, pastor of the First Mennonite Church in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Willis Sommer and Mrs. Suckau at the Mennonite parsonage here.

After a reception this evening for the relatives and friends at the home of the bride, Corporal and Mrs. Steiner plan to leave for a short wedding trip. In the near future, they will make their home at St. Paul, Minnesota where Corporal Steiner is a member of the Detachment Medical Department at the Station Hospital, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota. Mrs. Steiner graduated from Monroe High School and has been engaged as a seamstress at the Berne Manufacturing Company.

Adams County Historical Museum

1943b Scrapbook, image 008

Transcribed by Jim Cox