

DECATUR YOUNG MAN IS DROWNED IN WABASH RIVER

Walter Bodle, D.H.S. Sophomore, Loses Life In Fourth Of July Accident
WOULD-BE RESCUER ALMOST LOSES LIFE

Walter Bodle, age 16 years, a Decatur High School sophomore, was drowned Wednesday noon, while swimming in the Wabash River at Markle with his father, Ira Bodle, and Morris Butcher, also of Decatur. Mr. Butcher, who dived into the water to save the youth, struck his head on a stone and was pulled from the water in an unconscious condition, but was revived.

The Bodle and Butcher families had gone to Markle Tuesday evening, for a Fourth of July outing. They had camped on the banks of the river Tuesday night and he had been fishing and swimming in the river.

Walter was a good swimmer. The three men were in the water above the dam at Markle. One of them called to Walter, who was out farther than the other two, to let down and see how deep the water was at that point. Walter let down and his finger tips still protruded above the water. He then came up, but apparently lost his balance and fell over sideways, disappearing from view.

Mr. Butcher remarked to Mr. Bodle that he believed Walter had been swept over the dam, but Mr. Bodle said he thought the boy had just dived under the water. A few seconds later, Walter's head was seen above the water at the foot of the dam and he called to his father to get a fish pole and help him out.

Realizing that the young man was in need of help, Mr. Bodle ran to the river bank and searched for a fish pole, but could not find one. He picked up a small tree that had been broken off and handed it out to his son. Walter caught hold of the tree, but apparently was too weak to hold to it and he disappeared from view, again.

"I'm not going to stand here and let Walter drown," remarked Mr. Butcher, who immediately dived over the dam. Mr. Butcher did not come up right away, but a short time later his back was seen protruding above the water at a point nearly 100 feet down the stream. Some men who were standing on the bank waded into the water and carried him out. Mr. Butcher was unconscious and resuscitation was begun. He was revived after several minutes work. There was a cut on his forehead, indicating that he had struck his head on a stone when he dived over the dam.

The water at the foot of the dam was rapid and swirling. All men present were more or less strangers there and none would venture into the swirling water, especially since two men had gone down there. More than an hour later, some Markle men, who were acquainted with the river there, were brought to the scene of the drowning and they succeeded in locating Walter's body in about four feet of water and bringing it to shore about two hours after he went down. Efforts were made to revive him, but to no avail.