

Sad City Drowning

Limerick Boy's Bravery

Coroner and Need of Safe Bathing Places

At an inquest held at Harrington's Hospital, Limerick on Monday evening the placid and determined efforts of a young man named Thomas Foley to save the life of Joseph Walsh, aged 10 years, 17 St. Munchin's Street, Island Field, were referred to before Mr J S McDevlin, Esq., Deputy Coroner.

The deceased was drowned while bathing in the Shannon, at the Island Bank on Sunday evening.

Sergeant O'Mahony, Mary street, conducted the inquiry.

Frank Walsh, labourer, father of the deceased boy, stated he last saw his son alive at 7.20 p.m. on Sunday evening. He was a healthy boy, and did not suffer from any illness. He next saw him when he was recovered from the water between eight and half past eight.

Dr Hadden gave evidence of examining the body of the deceased at Harrington's Hospital. Artificial respiration was carried out without avail by himself and members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Death, in his opinion, was due to asphyxia following drowning.

Dr Hadden said he wished to pay tribute to the work of members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade in connection with the matter.

George Biske (11) stated he was swimming with the deceased at the Island Bank on Sunday evening. The tide was full in. Witnesses divided in, and the deceased followed. The deceased caught witness who felt himself sinking. He struggled and got away from Walsh, who went under the water. He saw Walsh in difficulties, and he came out of the water and called for help. A man came along, dived in and after some time brought up the body. From the time that the deceased first went under the water until he was brought out about 15 minutes elapsed.

Thomas Foley, Strand Invericks, Limerick, stated he was a passer-by. On Sunday evening he was walking along the Island bank. He saw the young boy Blake coming out of the water. Blake called witness, who ran up, and after removing his shoes dived into the water at the spot pointed out by Blake. On the first occasion he failed to find the body.

Sergeant O'Mahony—How many times did you dive in?—Five times, and I got him at the fifth attempt. He was lying with his face downwards in the water.

Witness added that when he brought the deceased out of the water he showed no signs of life. A crowd gathered on the bank applied artificial respiration.

This concluded the evidence.

Coroner—This is a very sad case and is unfortunately one of the many accidents that happened from time to time. I sympathize sincerely with the father of the boy, and at the same time I would like to commend Thomas Foley for his very determined efforts to rescue the boy. It certainly was not his fault that the boy lost his life as he did everything possible to save him. He did recover the body, but unfortunately too late. I think there is a case for recommending to the Carnegie Trust.

The Coroner added that the death of the boy illustrated once again the lack of proper swimming facilities in Limerick. Every other place had safe swimming places, and Limerick was certainly very backward in this respect. There certainly should be a place where young boys and young girls could go to swim without risk, and it was clear that the proper authorities at Limerick were not doing anything about the matter.