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A Century of Drownings: 1863-1963



Harvey's Lake Police Chief Fred Swanson recovered 17 drowning victims over the years of his service, from 1932 to 1952.

1. Introduction

Harvey's Lake Police Chief Fred Swanson recovered 17 drowning victims over the years of his service, from 1932 to 1952. This article recounts 57 reported deaths by drowning at Harvey's Lake between the years 1863-1963. Nearly half of the drownings occurred in the 1920s and 1930s. During this time public access to the Lake was at its zenith with major beaches at Sunset, Picnic Grounds, and Sandy Beach. But there were also boat rental services at points around the Lake. A number of drownings occurred, too, at Warden Place where a drop-off on the Lake bottom contributed to deaths.

The available reports suggest that three victims were never recovered from the Lake's depths.

2. The Early Drownings: 1863-1900

An early report of drownings in Harvey's Lake concluded that eight persons had drowned there by 1897. (Wilkes-Barre Record, December 21, 1897.)

According to the newspaper report, the earliest drowning was John M. Clayton, a young son of James I. Clatyon, manager of the Lake House Hotel in 1859-1864 (later renamed the Rhoads Hotel). However, this report is in error. James Clayton, age 3, died in a fall at his father's Lake home on October 21, 1860. He is buried at the Idetown Cemetery. The earliest documented drowning occurred on June 13, 1863, while David Westover of Dallas was presumably fishing. His body was found early the next morning, a Sunday. The report is found in the Luzerne Union, a Wilkes-Barre newspaper, for Wednesday, June 17, 1863:

David Westover, Esq., of Dallas Township, aged about 50 years, was found drowned in Harvey's Lake, on Sunday morning last. He was in a standing position, the water being but a very little over his head, and is said to be the first person ever known to have been drowned in the lake - a singular circumstance when we consider the great number of persons that have been at times around and upon it, either for fishing or pleasuring.

The next drowning occurred on September 18, 1881, when 16 year old Agnes Kitchen fell from a boat at the North Corner (later known as Alderson). Her father, John Kitchen, was descended from among the earliest families at the lake.

Ten years later on September 30, 1891, a Kingston boy, Gomer Rosser, drowned in unclear circumstances. His brother, Richard, discovered his younger brother under the water while he was fishing from an early steamboat dock. Gomer Rosser was only one day short of his tenth birthday.



The Picnic Grounds beach about 1930. Annie Smith drowned near here before the area became a popular tourist attraction.

As darkness fell on October 24, 1894, 73 year old Jacob Johnson, a farmer who also repaired Lake docks and cottages, had boarded a steamboat at Alderson. When he arrived at the Lake Grove House dock at the Inlet (Sunset) he became confused in the dark and fell into the water. His fall was unheard and he was not discovered until it was too late.

Two friends, Gowen C. Herdman, age 19, and Lewis A. McCarty, age 20, were riding horses on June 23, 1895. They sought to cool off the horses by riding into the Lake shallows when McCarty's horse stumbled and panicked and

McCarty fell into the Lake. The horse had McCarty pinned under the water. Herdman tried to aid his friend but McCarty seized him and both drowned. The bodies were raised when Capt. Bond (owner of the Big Boat - later Shawanese) threw lighted dynamite into the search area. McCarty was from Dallas. Herdman's father was the Kunkle postmaster.

Less than two weeks later on July 12, 1895, Annie Smith, age 14, of Alderson, drowned while swimming 50 feet out in the lake in front of her home near the Picnic Grounds. The funeral was held at the North Corner school house (presumably at a one-room school which once existed there).

3. An Era of Drownings: 1901-1940

Fred Puterbaugh, age 15, the son of Dora Puterbaugh, was skating on the Lake in early January 1901 when he fell into a hole in the ice. A son of Thomas Deiter saw the accident from a distance. The body was recovered in 40 feet of water two hours later. This loss was the first fatality through the ice at the Lake. The boy is buried at the Perrego Cemetery which fronts the Lake road between the Picnic Grounds and Sandy Beach.

Two young boys drowned over the weekend of June 6-7, 1903. Earl Hoover, age 8, drowned on June 6 while his father, Perry Hoover, a carpenter was repairing a dock. The next day Joseph Masterson, age 6, from Wilkes-Barre, fell into the Lake and drowned when his father and another adult tried to exchange seats and the rowboat turned over.

A Scranton man, Theodore Yoos, drowned on August 25, 1906, while fishing. (During this time drownings in the Susquehanna River in the Wyoming Valley were very common. By early August 1906 26 died in the river.) During a C.T.A.U. camp meeting (a temperance group) on August 7, 1907, James McGreevy, Jr., age 20, drowned in the Lake while bathing. Another bather, Arthur Jones, age 25, drowned the following year on July 13, 1908.

The first auto fatality at the Lake occurred on July 4, 1910, when George H. Callahan's automobile ran into the Lake. He was pinned under the vehicle. He did not actually drown. He died from a broken neck. The following July 4, 1911, Joseph Morricks, from Luzerne, fell off a raft and drowned. On July 24, 1912,

George Brean of Nanticoke drowned after chasing a hat which blew into the Lake. On July 4, 1913, seventeen-year-old Alice Crispell was found drowned next to the Weckesser boat house between Sunset and Outlet. During the evening of July 4 she and friends were illegally drinking at the Hotel Oneonta. A boyfriend was charged in the press for the murder of Crispell but a coroner's jury released him for lack of evidence. The mystery of her death was never solved.

Generally, there was one drowning annually at the Lake for the next several years. William Griffith, 24, from Miners Mills drowned while swimming on August 2, 1913. Five year old Warren Yeisley from Wilkes-Barre fell from the Inlet bridge and drowned on July 31, 1914, and George Stevenson, 24, from Wilkes-Barre, drowned while bathing on July 18, 1915, followed by Bernard McDonald, 19, of Duryea, on August 20, 1916, also while bathing.

The Lake's second automobile accident death occurred on July 24, 1917, when Ethel Wood, 30, of Danville, Pa., died at the Outlet curve. On July 11, 1918, Mary Williamson, age 18, from Wilkes-Barre drowned while bathing.

With the close of the decade two drownings occurred in the post World War I year. Edward Slivinski of Kingston fell into the Lake when his canoe upset on July 27, 1919. His drowning was followed less than two weeks later on August 8 when Joseph A. Laufer, age 23, died while diving into the Lake from a boat at Warden Place. A warning buoy was missing (a common problem with marking dangerous areas). Laufer had recently returned from service with the U.S. Army.

The next drowning occurred on August 13, 1921, when Robert Owens, 17, Edwardsville, fell from a boat. Owens was an Edwardsville breaker boy. He joined the Edwardsville American Legion for a Saturday picnic at the Picnic Grounds. He rented a boat and was also dressed to swim under his clothes. He rowed from the Picnic Grounds towards Alderson. He was removing his outer clothes when the rowboat upturned and Owens fell into the water. He surfaced three times as onlookers watched but a rescuer was too late. Owens slipped to the bottom and he was not recovered until the next morning.

Roland Gross, age 22, a WWI veteran, drowned while ice skating at the Lake on January 8, 1922. He had skated out on to the Lake from Sunset towards Willow Point above Warden Place. He was initially saved by the heroic efforts of a friend Claude MacDougall who dived into the freezing water. But before help could arrive to assist MacDougall, his hold on Gross was lost and MacDougall had to be rescued. Gross's body was recovered with grappling hooks on January 10. Gross had survived 12 operations after

serious wounds during the Battle of Argonne when a German artillery shell killed four of Gross's fellow servicemen from Battery E, 109th Field Artillery, the local reserve unit.

On July 14, 1922, Charles Mack, Ruggles, drowned while swimming. Mack was swimming off the Oenonta landing at Sunset when he suddenly went under the water. A friend, Edward Bevan, reached him but was unable to hold Mack. Bevan swam to shore and found a rowboat. He tried to alert a steamboat, arriving at the Oneonta, to throw a rope out to where Mack was last seen but the steamboat crew could not hear him. Two rescue divers later recovered Mack's body. He may have choked or had other physical difficulty which led to his drowning since he was a good swimmer.

There were double drownings each year from 1923 to 1925. On June 17, 1923, Anna Bonsavage, 17, Larksville, drowned.

Eighteen year old Leo Emerick drowned on August 18, 1923, when his canoe capsized. A speed boat contest was underway at the time and waves upset the canoe. Three friends in the canoe were saved by Henry Jones who rushed to the scene in a motor launch. The accident occurred midpoint between Warden Place and the Picnic Grounds, the deepest part of the Lake. The Chief of Police, Michael Brown, and George Nicholson, President of Harvey's Lake Protective Association, ordered dynamite to be exploded in the lake in an unsuccessful effort to raise the body. A professional diver from Little Falls, New York, was engaged to dive for Emerick but he was unsuccessful. Finally, on August 30 the search was abandoned. It was believed the body had sunk into the muddy bottom of the lake. Listed as a drowning, it is possible Emerick was fatally injured in the collision.

Andrew Karalus, 30, Wilkes-Barre, drowned near the Picnic Grounds on August 23, 1924, and a week later Ralph Jones, 23, drowned at the Warden Place stepoff (possibly after a heart attack) on August 31, 1924.

Louis Cappellini, 23, Hudson, cousin of Renaldo Cappellini, United Mine Workers President, District No. 1, drowned on July 27, 1925, at Willow Point when he fell from a canoe. His roommate, John Marinangioli, jumped from another canoe to save Cappellini, but both were lost in the deepest part of the Lake. The Lake was dragged the following day under the supervision of Police Chief John T. Ruth but with no success. Family members offered a \$200.00 reward for recovery of the bodies. Divers were also called but were unsuccessful. Finally, on July 30, 1925, Louis Cappellini was recovered by Alex Kocher, Marion Avery and Cornelius Smith, from Alderson, who continuously dragged the bottom with grapplers

for 24 hours. Cappellini was located 200 feet off shore from Willow Point, a deep section of the Lake. Apparently, the body of John Marinangioli was never recovered - the second unrecovered victim.

A multiple drowning nearly occurred on July 24, 1927, when a dozen men and women fell into the water at Sunset when a railing around the bathing area boardwalk gave way. But the water was only 3 feet deep. Yale Shapiro, 17, Wilkes-Barre, was found unconscious after he struck his head on the Lake bottom, but he was later revived at Nesbitt Hospital, Kingston. However, he died of head injuries 5 days later on July 29, 1927.

On July 23, 1927, John Ragunis, 26, was struck by a motor boat propeller while swimming from Sandy Beach to Sunset. Ragunis was a well-known boxer from Wilkes-Barre who fought under the name "Johnny Hardy." His swim was followed by two friends in a rowboat. He was struck near the center of the Lake opposite Point Pleasant. There was speculation that he was killed instantly.



Sunset swimming area in 1935. A railing gave way at the boardwalk in 1927, leading to the death of a 17-year-old, who hit his head on the Lake bottom.

A New York City diver was retained to recover the victim. The diver made a dozen descents to the Lake bottom at a depth of 90 feet. With early diving equipment each search of the bottom lasted only 8 to 10 minutes. The unnamed diver stated the bottom consisted of "fine shifting mud which is so oozy and sticky that it is like muck or quicksand. Working while walking on the bottom is difficult and dangerous." The diver was unable to locate the victim. A search of later accounts does not disclose that "Johnny Hardy" was ever found - the third unrecovered body in the Lake. Since no autopsy could be

performed, Ragunis may have drowned after an injury or he may have in fact been killed in the accident.

On July 25, 1927, Pious Telelsha, 25, from Baltimore, Maryland, drowned at Warden Place. He was a student priest visiting the area and was to study in Rome in September. He had waded into the Lake to retrieve a drifting rowboat when the wind carried him and the boat into deeper water. A month later Martin J. Noon, 21, Wilkes-Barre, drowned on August 10, 1927, when he fell from a raft.

Another pair of drownings occurred in 1928. Ralph Frey, 19, Wilkes-Barre, fell from a canoe on July 11, 1928, and John Sauer, Jr., 8, Wilkes-Barre, drowned on August 30, 1928, while swimming. Andrew Mahler, Jr., Kingston, fatally broke his neck while diving into the Lake from a dock on May 29, 1929.

There apparently were no drownings at the Lake in 1930. But in late August 1931 a dreadful crash of a motorboat into a rowboat caused 3 drownings. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hicks, of Warrior Run, rented a rowboat at Sunset at Swan's boat rental during the early evening of August 20, 1931. They were taking nephew, Sylvester Shoemaker, 14, with them. As darkness fell Mr. Hicks was returning to Sunset. A motorboat, driven by a 15 year old, collided in the dark with the rowboat and the Hicks family fell into the Lake's 40 foot depths. Mr. Hicks tried to locate his wife and nephew but he likely drowned while trying to reach shore while too exhausted. His body was recovered rather quickly. The next day 40 boats began grappling. Hick's wife and nephew were located clasped in each other's arms.

The drowning of Joseph Bradbury, age 20, a graduate of Luzerne High School, on June 27, 1934, was especially tragic. Bradbury was experimenting with a homemade diving helmet. The following account is taken from the Wilkes-Barre Record, June 28, 1934:

Experimenting with a homemade diving helmet in Harvey's Lake yesterday afternoon while his parents watched from the shore about 15 feet away proved fatal to Joseph Bradbury, 20, of 361 Walnut Street, Luzerne. He died, physicians informed Chief of Police Ira M. Stevenson, of asphyxiation, resulting, they explained, from the helmet's lack of provisions for the escape of carbon monoxide generated by the young man's breathing. It was the first fatality of the season in Harvey's Lake.

Bradbury's death cast gloom on members of Luzerne Presbyterian and Luzerne Methodist Episcopal Sunday Schools who were having a joint outing at the Lake yesterday.

He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School and with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Bradbury, had arrived only about 15 minutes before he went into the water. The helmet was made of a hot water heater which fitted over his head. A piece of garden hose was attached to it and holes were put in the front of the helmet and glass inserted so that vision would be unobstructed when submerged.

Before wading to the point where he was to submerge for the test, the young man tied a thirty-five

pound stone to his body for a weight. The test was made in about nine feet of water at a point below the Picnic Ground beach.

Orville and Lawrence Atherholt, brothers and companions of Bradbury, reported that he had been under water for about seven minutes when George Lutz, life guard, seeing bubbles arising on the surface of the water at a point where Bradbury had submerged, suspected that the young man was in danger. Lutz dove into the water and discovered Bradbury lying on the bottom of the lake. He attempted to raise him to the surface but was unable because of the stone weight. Lutz enlisted the aid of Sidney Ganaposki, another Harvey's Lake life guard, and after removing the stone Bradbury's body was taken to shore.

A month later the famous "American Tragedy" murder of Freda McKechnie occurred at the Sandy Beach area. While her body was recovered from the Lake her death was not a drowning.

Stephen Yachna, age 19, of Duryea drowned when his boat, too full of picnickers, capsized on June 30, 1935. On August 16, 1936, Nellie Barbonis, Plains, drowned.

A double drowning of two ice skaters during the winter on March 7, 1937, was prevented by Ruth Jackson, 23, a Harvey's Lake school teacher. There were an estimated 5,000 skaters on the Lake ice at the Picnic Grounds and Sandy Beach on this Sunday. Two unidentified girls at Sandy Beach fell through the ice in the mid-after noon. Jackson threw a long scarf to the girls, and aided by a cousin, Ruth Jones, the girls were pulled out. A large crowd was at the beach to watch Henry Deater and Andrew Lotusky, clad only in bathing suits, as they skated on to the ice and then dove into an open area of water created by ice harvesters. There were also ice boats, home made ice scooters, and even bicycle riders on the ice.

Iris Stevenson, the nearly three year old daughter of Police Chief Ira C. Stevenson, drowned on May 6, 1937, when she fell from a dock in front of the police station. She had wandered from the family's Sunday dinner and Chief Stevenson saw her in the lake. He swam the 40 feet into the lake and recovered his daughter. But despite an hour-long effort by famed Lake swimmer and lifeguard Elwood "Woody" Davis and other help, Iris could not be revived. Even after two physicians, G.H. Rauch and F.B. Schooley, declared Iris dead, Woody Davis and other lifeguards from around the lake tried to revive the girl. A lengthy and moving tribute to Iris was published in the Wilkes-Barre Times Leader on May 6, 1937, by Kay Dangerfield, a local columnist.

Three other drownings followed in 1937. Anthony Wozniski, died on June 9, 1937, when his canoe upset. Frank Meighan, known as the lake hermit, drowned after a fall into the lake on June 28, 1937. A separate article on Meighan's drowning is posted on this website. John Kelly, 23, formerly a salesman for Macy's in New York City, was at a family gathering near the Lake police station on August 15, 1937. He drowned in 8 feet of water. His brother, Harry, and sister, Mary, were unsuccessful in a rescue attempt. Mary was fully clothed when she ran into the Lake and had to be rescued herself. Harry Kelly, too, also had to be helped from the Lake. John Kelly was recovered from the Lake after 20 minutes under water, but despite two hours of artificial respiration efforts by Woody Davis, Kelly could not be revived. Dr. Benjamin Davis pronounced Kelly dead. Kelly was a 1932 graduate of GAR High School and attended Brooklyn College.

The close of the 1930s drew considerable publicity for drownings at the Lake. On August 16, 1938, William Morgan, age 16, from Ashley drowned at Warden Place, a particularly dangerous area to swim. About 30 feet beyond the shore there is a severe drop in the lake bottom. The ledges at this point prevented the larger steamboats from docking here. Morgan was swimming when he found himself suddenly in deeper water. He panicked and drowned. A large rescue group could not find the body. Finally, grappling hooks were used and Morgan's body was recovered after 30 minutes of trolling for him.



Sunset Beach in 1935. The public facilities here were popular not only for swimming, but also row boat rentals and ice skating , both of which have contributed to drownings and a few close calls in the area.

On August 26, 1939, John E. Cule, 17, from Scranton, was in a rowboat with his two sisters when the boat was struck by a motorboat. Cule wore an iron leg brace from childhood due to infantile paralysis. One sister was unable to hold on to her brother and he drowned in 75 feet of water. Both sisters were rescued, but a score of volunteers using a large underwater searchlight, aided by a Shickshinny diver with a homemade diving suit, failed to recover Cule. The State Governor, Arthur H. James, from Plymouth, had a Chester, Pa. diver George Hughes, Jr. brought in by the State Police. A diving platform was placed in the water near the Picnic Grounds. The scene drew thousands of onlookers creating a traffic mess.

Hughes remained at the Lake, with his 70 year old father and a younger brother (also experienced divers), for several days. Finally, after 8 hours of diving on September 1, 1939, Hughes recovered Cule from heavy

tangled weeds at the lake bottom. Hughes had made about 50 dives in the recovery effort. An autopsy disclosed Cule died from a fractured skull in the boat collision not from drowning.

The Cule recovery was immediately followed by the drowning of Millard “Slim” Haefele, 34, of Wilkes-Barre, when he fell from a motorboat on September 2, 1939, near Warden Place. The diver, Hughes, was returning to the Philadelphia area when he was recalled by Governor James. Hughes failed to recover Haefele despite numerous dives over several days. Again crowds lined the shore and special traffic details were handled by the police.



Warden Place Beach, near the Lakeside Inn (in the distance) about 1935. The lake bottom drops off suddenly about 30 feet from shore, making the area dangerous for swimmers and boats alike.

During the rescue efforts, Eugene Wahl, 30, of Wilkes-Barre, swam out to the scene. The police waved him off and as Wahl swam back to shore he disappeared under the surface. Thomas J. Donnelly, age 18, pulled the 200 pound Wahl from the lake. He was unconscious for 30 minutes until he was revived under the supervision of Dr. Benjamin S. Davis.

Finally, on September 10, 1939, Slim Haefele was recovered by grappling hooks. By this time Hughes had concluded his diving efforts. He found the 4 foot layer of mud at the bottom at Warden Place too difficult to search. Hughes

performed contract work for Sun Shipbuilders in Chester. He had wide experience in ocean and fresh water. He told Police Chief Ira Stevenson, “Chief, this is the most treacherous body of water I have ever worked in.” A further account appeared in the Sunday Independent, September 10, 1939:

“Mud, mud, mud, was the way Hughes described the bottom,” Chief Stevenson said. “Hughes told me the mud is more than four feet deep at the bottom - probably a lot more - because Hughes on his dives carried ‘gaffe,’ which is only four feet long. Hughes told me he pushed this into the mud its entire length and it could have been pushed still deeper.

Hughes told me how he “worked blind” at the bottom because the mud raised a deep cloud as soon as the diving boots touched the bottom. He told me he had absolutely no vision.

Interesting was Chief Stevenson's disclosure that Hughes did most of his search on his hands and knees.

"Hills and dales" at the bottom of the lake were described to Stevenson by Hughes, who said he started on a decline at one point and walked downward for a distance of 30 feet, but at that point was 80 feet below the surface of the water and did not go any further because of his equipment.

Haefele's body was recovered by a crew in John Hanson's speedboat, the same boat from which the victim fell last Saturday afternoon at 1. It was noted that Haefele was recovered exactly a week from the time he was lost, less one hour.

4. Drownings Decline: 1941-1963

On September 9, 1941, Teddy Frantz, age 53, who developed Stonehurst (near the Lake boat club), drowned after his twenty-foot motorboat collided with a seaplane moored near the Girl Scout camp. During the early evening Frantz had taken Ray Jewett, Detroit, and Margaret Brodhead, Wilkes-Barre, with her daughter Thelma, on a fast cruise in Frantz's 35 horsepower motorboat.



Mack Stogner's sea plane is crippled after being hit by a speedboat in 1941. Teddy Frantz, piloting the speedboat, drowned after the collision.

The seaplane, owned by Mack A. Stogner, New York City, had been at the Lake for 3 weeks. Stogner was staying in the Berwick area as manager of the food concession at the Berwick foundry plant. His plane was usually moored near the Mallander dock. As darkness approached Frantz's boat ripped through the plane's undercarriage and Frantz and Thelma Brodhead were thrown into the Lake. The young Thelma tried to rescue Frantz but she was injured herself and lost hold of Frantz. She was then able to swim to the Mallander dock. Frantz drowned in 35 feet of water. His body was recovered 4 hours later. His wristwatch had stopped at 7:22 P.M.

Frantz was recovered by use of a searchlight the County had purchased for underwater searches. Leading the Frantz search were Harvey's Lake Police Chief Ira C. Stevenson and patrolmen Fred Swanson and Cornelius Smith. Dr. Benjamin S. Davis was at the scene for the recovery.

The reports of drownings became fewer in later years. On July 19, 1942, four friends from Miners Mills rented a rowboat at Sandy Beach and were midway to the Picnic Grounds when an oar fell into the water. Anthony Burian, a 19 year old Army officer, and one of the friends, dove into the Lake for it. His friend, Joseph Wysocki, then lost his balance and fell into the Lake from the boat. When Burian sought to rescue Wysocki both became locked in a "death hold" and were drowned. Thirty boats and a State Police water rescue detail grappled the Lake bottom. George Jones, a veteran Lake lifeguard, used a Red Cross diving mask in an effort to recover the victims. Dan Davenport, Sr., located Wysocki on July 20, 1942, by grappling. On July 21 Burian was recovered by 12 year old Dan Davenport, Jr., who as in a rowboat aiding in the grappling with patrolman Fred Swanson. Nathan B. Iscovitz, 53, drowned on August 14, 1942, near Sandy Beach while renting a rowboat for lake use.

Joseph C. Hisarick, 18, of Edwardsville, nearly drowned on August 6, 1944, in 8 feet of water at Sandy Beach. Fortunately, deputy county coroner Dr. C.A. Miller, who had a cottage at the Lake, was at hand. He injected a stimulant which revived Chisarick and Chief Fred Swanson rushed him to the Nesbitt Hospital in Kingston.

Harry F. Sorber, Jr., 16, of Kingston, drowned on July 1, 1945. He was among 5 boys in a rowboat off Warden Place when they began to "rock the boat." Police Chief Fred Swanson tried to warn the boys. The boat capsized and Sorber slipped under the water. He was recovered by grappling. Swanson and others worked on Sorber for an hour. But Dr. Benjamin S. Davis had to pronounce him dead. Sorber was the first drowning since 1942.

On July 4, 1949, Walter Anusicwicz, 59, drowned after his small power boat sank. His wife and son were rescued. On July 13, 1949, the body of state trooper Frank Gilvery floated to the surface of the lake near Brokenshire's Hotel at Warden Place. He had disappeared seven months earlier. His family believed he had gone to the Lake and the circumstances of the drowning were unclear.

Another drowning at the Lake did not occur until August 25, 1959, when Alexander Iwanski, 19, a visitor from New Jersey, died in his first attempt at scuba-diving. Iwanski, a college sophomore, was diving with two friends from Edwardsville. Iwanski was not using standard scuba gear and had difficulty while at a 15

foot depth. His friends were able to raise Iwanski to the surface but lost him. He slipped to the bottom. His friends tried to retrieve him, but could not locate him. Tommy O'Brien, the Lake diver, located the body in 25 feet of water.

Paula Wrobel, a 13 year old girl scout, from south Wilkes-Barre, saved the life of W. Bartholomew Mahon, age 8, in 1959 at Sunset. Mahon slipped from a water tube 30 feet out into the Lake. Wrobel swam out to Mahon, and with Mahon struggling in panic, Wrobel was able to bring Mahon to safety. In 1961 she was awarded the Carnegie Hero medal.

The final drowning for our 100 year mark in 1963 was Donald Hall, age 14, of south Wilkes-Barre. On June 14, 1961, Hall and a friend were at Warden Place in a rowboat. They lost an oar and both boys eventually dove into the Lake to recover it. Hall was lost in 50 feet of water. Nearly a score of scuba divers joined the rescue effort. Hall was found the next day. No drownings were located for 1962-63.

Ronald Lupa, age 7, drowned while scuba-diving with a family member on August 13, 1976. He was found in six feet of water. James R. Passarielli, 23, drowned while swimming at a family dock on July 3, 1977. Dakota Williams, 24, was incapacitated by an electrical shock while working on a lake dock on July 2, 2016. He fell into the lake and drowned.

5. Post-1963 Drownings

The following drownings have been located for 1964-2018.

On June 27, 1976, Robert Brulo, 15, was swimming in the lake from a boat at Sunset when he disappeared from the surface of the Lake. His body was recovered by State Police scuba-divers and Tommy O'Brien, owner of the Harvey's Lake Diving School. Three years earlier in June 1973 O'Brien recovered the body of a Philadelphia man who drowned in a Franklin Township pond. Ronald Lupa, age 7, drowned while scuba-diving with a family member on August 13, 1976. He was in six feet of water.

James R. Passarielli, 23, drowned while swimming at a family dock on July 3, 1977.

On June 18, 1983, two adults and two children died in a horrible collision of motorboats on the Lake. The coroner concluded that all four deaths were caused by traumatic injuries and none by drowning.

In mid-June 1983 Kenneth Labar, 33, was in a boat on the Lake when he leaped into the Lake. He sank in 50 feet of water off Pole 56. A deputy sheriff, John Kastendieck, a trained scuba-diver, and Tommy O'Brien were unsuccessful in finding the victim and the body was never recovered. On May 1, 1988, Kenneth Cara, 30, a Schuylkill County policeman, was training at the Lake in scuba rescue techniques with other officers when he drowned for unknown reasons. No fault could be found with his equipment and a coroner's report could only conclude it was an unexplained drowning.

In March 1991 Leo Edwards, 38, drowned when his vehicle left the Lake road and plunged into the Lake. A Lake physician witnessed the accident, jumped into the water and pulled Edwards from the car but Edwards could not be revived. In June 1995 18 year old Arthur "Tommy" Rhone II drowned in the Lake near Pole 167.

In late April 1999 Atty. Joseph Gorman drowned when his car drove through a stop sign at the intersection of Noxen Road and Lakeside Drive next to the Hanson's Park grounds. The car crossed over Lakeside Drive and plunged into the Lake next to the Marina Cafe. The water temperature was estimated to be 43 degrees. Despite a rescue effort by James Starosta, Jr., Harvey's Lake Fire Department, and CPR by Starosta's son and wife, Gorman could not be revived.

Dakota Williams, 24, was incapacitated by an electrical shock while working on a Lake dock on July 2, 2016. He fell into the Lake and drowned.

*** See a Complete List of Drowning Victims on the Next Page**

List of Drowning Victims

This is as complete a list as possible of drownings at Harvey's Lake. The primary source is the Wilkes-Barre Record Almanac; corroborating news articles from the Record and other sources have also been used where possible. These sources may not be complete. Dr. Benjamin S. Davis used the Almanac as the basis for the accompanying article.

1. June 13, 1863 David Westover
 2. Sep. 18, 1881 Agnes Kitchen
 3. Sep. 30, 1891 Gomer Rosser
 4. Oct. 24, 1894 Jacob Johnson
 5. June 23, 1895 Gowen C. Herdman
 6. June 23, 1895 Lewis A. McCarty
 7. July 12, 1985 Annie Smith
 8. Jan. 9, 1901 Fred Puterbaugh
 9. June 6, 1903 Earl Hoover
 10. June 7, 1903 Joseph Masterson
 11. Aug. 25, 1906 Theodore Yoos
 12. Aug. 7, 1907 James McGreevy, Jr.
 13. July 13, 1908 Arthur Jones
 14. July 4, 1911 Joseph Morrnick
 15. July 24, 1912 George Brean
 16. July 4, 1913 Alice Crispell
 17. Aug. 2, 1913 William Griffiths
 18. July 31, 1914 Warren Yeisley
 19. July 18, 1915 George Stevenson
 20. Aug. 20, 1916 Bernard McDonald
 21. July 11, 1918 Mary Williamson
 22. July 27, 1919 Edward Slivinski
 23. Aug. 8, 1919 Joseph A. Laufer
 24. Aug. 13, 1921 Robert Owens
 25. Jan. 8, 1922 Roland Gross
 26. July 14, 1922 Charles Mack
 27. June 17, 1923 Anna Bonsavage
 28. Aug. 18, 1923 Leo Emerick*
 29. Aug. 23, 1924 Andrew Karalus
 30. Aug. 31, 1924 Ralph Jones
 31. July 27, 1925 Louis Cappellini
 32. July 27, 1925 John Marinangioli*
 33. July 23, 1927 John Ragunis
(aka Johnny Hardy)*
 34. July 25, 1927 Pious Telelsha
 35. Aug. 10, 1927 Martin J. Noon
 36. July 11, 1928 Ralph Frey
 37. Aug. 30, 1928 John Sauer, Jr.
 38. Aug. 20, 1931 Charles Hicks
 39. Aug. 20, 1931 Mrs. Charles Hicks
 40. Aug. 20, 1931 Sylvester Shoemaker
 41. June 30, 1935 Stephen Yachna
 42. Aug. 16, 1935 Nellie Barbon1s
 43. May 6, 1937 Iris Stevenson
 44. June 9, 1937 Anthony Wozinski
 45. June 28, 1937 Frank Meighan
 46. Aug. 15, 1937 John Kelly
 47. Aug. 16, 1938 William Morgan
 48. Sep. 2, 1939 Millard "Slim" Haefele
 49. Sep. 9, 1941 Teddy Frantz
 50. July 19, 1942 Anthony Burian
 51. July 19, 1942 Joseph Wysocki
 52. Aug. 14, 1942 Nathan B. Iscovitz
 53. July 1, 1945 Harry F. Sorber
 54. July 4, 1949 Walter Anusicwicz
 55. July 13, 1949 Frank Gilvery
 56. Aug. 25, 1959 Alexander Iwanski
 57. June 14, 1961 Donald Hall
- Post-1963:**
58. June 27, 1976 Robert Brulo
 59. Aug. 13, 1976 Ronald Lupa
 60. July 3, 1977 James R. Passarielli
 61. June 15, 1983 Kenneth LaBar *
 62. May 1, 1988 Kenneth Cara
 63. Mar. 19, 1991 Leo Edwards>
 64. June 19, 1995 Arthur "Tommy" Rhone II
 65. Apr. 1, 1999 Atty. Joseph Gorman
 66. July 2, 2016 Dakota Williams
- *Victims whose bodies were not recovered.