

Clarence L. Nichols

(- 13 Apr 1929)

Nichols, Clarence L. Suddenly, on Saturday, April 13, 1929, Clarence L. Nichols, aged 11 years, beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. William E. Nichols of 1532 D st. s.e. Funeral from his late residence Tuesday, April 16, at 2 p.m. Interment Congressional Cemetery.

The Evening Star, April 14, 1929, p. 15

Boy Is Drowned Exhibiting Nerve

Nine-Year-Old Clarence Nichols Meets Death

Playing "Follow the Leader"

Clarence Nichols, 9 years old, paid with his life yesterday afternoon for the privilege of proving to his playmates that he had "as much nerve as the rest of them."

He was drowned in the Eastern Branch of the Potomac River when he fell from a steel girder beneath the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge while trying to emulate the feat of an older boy who had crossed the girder safely.

Brother Was In Group

Clarence, who lived at 1532 D street southeast, fell into the river shortly after noon. Members of Fire Department Rescue Squad No. 1 recovered the body an hour later. They worked for half an hour in a vain effort to resuscitate the lad.

The most pathetic figure among the little group surrounding the spot where the firemen were working over the body was 14-year-old Grafton Nichols, older brother of Clarence.

Grafton was crossing the bridge when the crowd below attracted his attention. He hurried down and got to the river's edge just as firemen lifted his brother's body from the water.

While the firemen worked over his brother's body he sat on the running board of a nearby automobile, a pitiful dejected figure. Tears coursed down his cheeks as he realized the hopelessness of their task.

Bernard Raum of the 2200 block of Prout street had crossed the girder safely before Clarence started on his fatal journey. As he stepped onto the beam, the others called to him to come back.

Rescue Effort Fails

"I'm not afraid," he called back, "I can do it just as well as the rest of you."

He had almost attained his goal and was bending forward to grasp a support when his foot slipped and he tumbled into the water.

Unable to swim, he came up once, struggled a few moments, and sank. Bernard Raum dived after him, but was unable to locate Clarence in the muddy water.