

Henry Robert Smoot (- 20 Jun 1915)

Smoot. Suddenly on Sunday, June 20, 1915, at 3:30 p.m., Henry Robert Smoot, aged sixteen years twenty eight days, beloved son of Daniel B. and Mamie Heil Smoot. Notice of funeral hereafter.

The Evening Star, June 21, 1915, p. 8

Three Boys Drown In Nearby Waters

Capsizing of Canoe Brings Death to Joel Cross and William W.F. Barron

Henry Smoot Loses Life While Wading

Father, Sitting on River Bank, Unable to Save Son -- Bodies Not Yet Recovered

Three boys were drowned yesterday afternoon within a short distance of this city. Joel Cross, 1423 34th street, and William W.F. Barron, 3506 M street, each nineteen years old, were drowned near Fletcher's as a result of the capsizing of a canoe, while Henry Smoot, sixteen years old, 209 11th street northeast, was drowned in Eastern Branch near Devil's Elbow, where he and two companions were wading. Daniel Smoot, his father, was seated on the shore watching the boys when the accident happened.

The three victims were prominently identified in church work. Young Smoot was crucifer and a member of the choir at the Episcopal Chapel of the Nativity, 14th and A streets northeast, while Barron and Cross were members of the Holy Name Society of Holy Trinity Church, 36th and O streets, Barron also was assistant master of ceremonies at the church.

Barron recently purchased a canoe, his friends stated, and yesterday afternoon he and Cross went up the river to enjoy a few hours away from the city.

The young men fastened their canoe to a rock opposite Fletcher's boathouse and strolled about the shore for several minutes. Seated on the rocks nearby were Mr. and Mrs. William S. Culbertson and their small child, 212 Maryland avenue northeast. The Culbertsons heard one of the canoeists ask his companion the time, and the other remarked that they had just forty minutes in which to return to the city. Entering the canoe, the boys paddled from shore and were in the deep water when their craft suddenly capsized and they were thrown overboard.

Thought Boys Were Swimming

William T. Finn, 528 23d street northwest, and the Culbertsons saw the young men struggling in the water. Their first thought was that the canoeists had gone overboard purposely and that they were frolicking in the water, but they soon realized that such was not the case. One of them held to the overturned canoe for a few seconds and when the swift current broke his hold he shouted for assistance.

Mr. Culbertson and others hurried in boats to the scene of the accident. Cross and Barron were beneath the surface of the water at that time and did not reappear. The one who failed to catch hold of the overturned canoe, it is stated, did not return to the surface, one hand being the only part of him seen by persons on shore.

It was not until the young men were overboard that they were seen by Mr. and Mrs. Culbertson and they were unable to tell just how it happened. Occupants of another canoe declared that Barron and Cross were changing positions in the boat when the accident happened.

Scores of canoeists and a number of anglers were on the river within a short distance of the scene of the accident. It was impossible for any of them to be of any assistance to the victims of the accident,

however, and all they could do was to take charge of the canoe and pick up the floating cushions, paddles and other paraphernalia. It was by means of the recovered property that relatives of the drowned men were able to make certain the identity of the victims.

Both College Graduates

Barron was the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Barron. The father is a member of the firm of Barron Bros., grocers, at 4275 M street. Cross was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Joel W. Cross, the father being employed as proofreader in the government printing office. Barron graduated from Georgetown University this year, it is stated, and had booked for a post-graduate course. Cross was a graduate of Gonzaga College.

It was shortly after 3 o'clock in the afternoon that the Smoot boy was drowned. Patrick Hurley, Harold Harrison and George Keiser, companions of Smoot went with him, and Mr. Smoot went along to look after them. The boys were on the east side of the stream, wading, and young Smoot waded beyond his depth and disappeared.

Mr. Smoot, who was seated on the shore, hurried into the water and made every effort to find his boy. He was unable to find him, however, and was forced to return home at night and tell his wife of the accident.

Lieut. Russell Dean, in charge of the harbor police, sent two squads of men out yesterday to drag for the bodies, and it was late last night when the work was suspended until today. This morning James McCann and Charles W. Little were taken to the vicinity of Devil's Elbow and left there in a bateau to drag for Smoot's body, a number of others assisting in the search.

Policemen V.A. Osterman and F.J. Brunner and Engineer Passeno were sent to the upper river to search for the bodies of Cross and Barron. The water is deep and the bottom of the river rocky where the two men were drowned, and it is stated it is almost impossible to make any headway with the drags.