

## **Joseph Henry McArdle**

**Rushworth Chronicle**

**5 February, 1937**

### **Sad Drowning Fatality**

#### **Rushworth lad drowned in channel**

##### **Fatal After-Lunch Swim**

Shortly after 2 o'clock on Friday afternoon last, Joseph Henry McArdle, aged 18, labourer, of Rushworth, was drowned in the Cussen channel on Mr. R. Ferguson's property, Toolamba West. Deceased, with three other youths, went to the channel for a swim after lunch. All entered the water, but after swimming down the channel for a short distance, McArdle got into difficulties and began to sink.

Two brothers, Fred and John Clark, attempted to pull the lad out of the water, but were pulled under. Fred Clark broke free and pulled his brother out of the channel, and ran for assistance. The body was subsequently recovered by Mr. S. O. Simson in about seven feet of water. Attempts at resuscitation failed.

Deceased was the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. McArdle, of Rushworth, and was employed by Mr. Simson, orchardist, of Toolamba West. Rushworth residents were shocked to hear of this popular young man's death.

The McArdle family has been most unfortunate. In June last, the eldest son was killed in a shotgun accident. Just previously their home and contents were destroyed by fire.

The remains were interred in the cemetery on Saturday afternoon last, when there was a very large gathering at the graveside. The last rites were performed by Rev. Fr. Tehan.

##### **Coronial inquiry**

An inquest was held before the deputy, Mr. W. J. Wilson, J.P., at Tatura on Saturday.

Henry M. McArdle, labourer (father of the deceased), Rushworth, stated he last saw his son alive about 2 p.m. on Sunday, January 24th, when he left home to work for Mr. Stewart Simson. He was in good health and spirits.

Frederick Clark, labourer, Rushworth, deposed: I came with the deceased from Rushworth on Sunday, 24th January, and commenced work the following day at Mr. Stewart Simson's orchard. Shortly after two o'clock on Friday, January 29th, in company with my brother, John Clark, the deceased and another youth named Arthur Breasley. I went in first and Breasley, McArdle and my brother followed. After a short swim I called out to McArdle that it was deep. I turned to swim back and McArdle passed me. When I next saw McArdle he was going under. I pulled my brother out of the water, meanwhile McArdle had disappeared. I ran back to the orchard to the men working on the grader and told them what had happened. I also told other men in the orchard. I did not see McArdle being pulled out of the channel. I am not a good swimmer.

Charles John Clark, brother of the previous witness, gave corroborative testimony.

Stewart O. Simson, orchardist, Toolamba West, said that shortly after 2 p.m. on Friday, 29th January, he was informed that McArdle was in difficulties in the Cussen channel in Mr. R. Ferguson's property. He immediately telephoned the Tatura police. In company with a man named Lincoln he hurried to the spot. Lincoln, a lad named Clayton and witness dived in after McArdle. After about ten minutes witness located the body in about seven feet of water, and brought it out to the bank. First aid was applied until the arrival of the police and Dr. Park. The tragedy occurred in a hole in the channel where a check had been removed. McArdle and his companions had been at the packing shed all the morning, and there had been no quarrel. The hole in the channel was about 20 feet wide and 30 to 40 feet long. Deceased appeared to be strong and healthy.

Dr. James Park, Tatura, deposed that death was due to asphyxiation, caused by immersion in water.

Senior-Constable Naughtin stated that there were no marks of violence on the body and enquiries did not disclose any suspicious circumstances concerning the drowning.

The deputy coroner gave a verdict in accordance with Dr. Park's testimony.