

[Howie, Nellie Malisca]

DROWNED HERSELF

SHE DID IT DELIBERATELY

Chose Almost the Identical Spot in Which Another  
Young Woman Drowned Herself a Little Over A Year Ago

East Aurora, May 14.—(Special.)—The suicide of Miss Nellie Cutter which occurred a little over a year ago, when she left her home at midnight and plunged into the icy waters of Cazenovia Creek, is still fresh in the minds of nearly every person in town and right on to the heels of fatality comes an equally shocking case.

Between 3 and 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon Miss Nellie Malisca Howie, a girl 19 years old, went to death by the same means in nearly the exact spot in the creek. Her body was found shortly after noon to-day, by the party of searchers who had been trying to find her since early last evening.

Miss Howie was employed in the Damon Hotel at the west end of the town. Early in the afternoon Mrs. Damon, wife of the proprietor, went out to do some shopping, leaving the Howie girl and her daughter in the hotel. She was gone for two or three hours. When she returned she asked her daughter where Nellie was. Nellie had gone to the People's Supply store to buy a pair of slippers. This surprised Mrs. Damon, as she had told both of the girls that they were to stay at home while she herself was away.

When supper time came Nellie had not returned, and Mrs. Damon was getting alarmed. Eight o'clock came and there were no signs of the missing girl. Mrs. Damon had a talk with her husband and they decided that something must be done. A few of the neighbors were made acquainted with the facts in the case and a searching party organized. An hour or so later another party joined in the search.

The girl had not been to the store where she said she was going when she left the hotel, neither had she been seen in the upper part of the town. John Tackaberry, who lives on Hamburg Street near the bridge, said that he saw her pass his house about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, going toward the creek. She was seen a few minutes later going up the hill after crossing the bridge. The same person said that when she reached the summit of the hill she turned and came down again. As this was the last that was seen of her alive, she probably went directly to the bank of the creek and jumped in.

The attention of the searchers was then turned to the creek. They looked up and down the stream for tracks but did not succeed in finding any. Until nearly daylight the search was continued without finding any trace of the missing girl.

Early this morning a number of citizens went to the dam and removed a number of the boards to let the water drain off, in hopes that the body might then be found. It was an accepted fact by this time that the missing girl had committed suicide by drowning herself in the still waters of the Cazenovia.

[Howie, Nellie Malisca]

About 12 o'clock the water had been lowered, and a boat was procured and the search renewed. Within an hour the girl's body was found on the creek bottom about 200 feet from the bridge, in almost the identical spot that the body of Nellie Cutter was found a little over a year ago.

The girl was clad in a black dress skirt and wore a silk waist [blouse], which was much worn. In one hand she grasped a handkerchief. On the other there was a gold watch chain tangled around her fingers. Two very plain rings were on one of the fingers.

Her body showed that it had been in the water for several hours, and it is now assumed that she must have committed the deed after descending the hill between 3 and 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon. It is thought that it was her intention to jump into the creek when she reached the stream the first time, but the sight of Tackaberry, who was working within 100 feet of the road where she passed, made her fear detection. She therefore crossed the bridge and went up the hill, turned around, and on the way down crossed into the meadow and went straight to the water's edge.

The clothes that she wore were not her best, but a second change. Before leaving the hotel she went to her room and took off her watch and put it in the bureau drawer in an adjoining room. She did not take her purse, and if she was going to get the slippers, as she stated on leaving the house, she would have taken money with her. It was evidently clearly in her mind to commit the deed before she left the hotel.

Her body was removed to the Fire Hall at the West End, and the inquest will be held as soon as Coroner Fay Flansburg can get here. He has been notified, but will not be here until late to-night or early in the morning.

There were several marks and scratches on the face of the dead girl, which are supposed to have been caused by the head coming in contact with the rocks at the bottom of the creek, or possibly from the trunk of a tree near where she was found.

What could have caused the girl to take her life is not known. Mrs. Damon was completely broken down by the affair, and was unable to discuss the matter without shedding tears. She said that the girl was of good habits, and in every way respectable. Mrs. Damon said that she could not feel much worse if it was a member of her own family.

Miss Howie had neither father or mother, but had lived with two or three families for several years. Before coming to the Damon house she was employed at the Hammond house at the same end of the town. She was above the average as a waitress and had many girl friends. She always dressed neatly, and everyone speaks well of her.

She had two married sisters in town. They are Mrs. Ira Parker and Mrs. Frank Rixinger. William Howie, who lives here, is her brother.

[Howie, Nellie Malisca]

The cause of her act is thought to be insanity, as the mother died in an insane asylum.

Miss Howie was a member of the First Universalist Church, and the Rev. John A. Sayles, pastor, could only speak in the most complimentary terms of her. She also had many girl friends, who are completely mystified at her destroying herself.

An incident is told which shows that she had thought much on the subject of self-destruction. But [only] a few days ago she was in bathing [swimming] in the creek and she seemed to have a desire to get in over her head, and once the girls who were with her had to help her out when she got beyond her depth.

The funeral will be held to-morrow afternoon at 4 o'clock.

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