

One of the most shocking calamities that this paper has ever been called upon to record occurred Sunday morning with George F. Drube met a sudden and untimely death in the cold waters of Merrill lake, two miles northwest of town. At the same time, Dr. Paul R. Holtz, of the Wheatland hospital staff, narrowly escaped a like fate, his life being saved only by the aid of John Merback.

A party consisting of George Drube, Dr. Holtz, John Merback, George Griffin, and S.H. Whitney of Sunrise, young Lester Potter and Johnny Merback went to the lake early in the morning to shoot ducks. The hunters had met with considerable success and a number of birds were lying on the surface of the small lake. George and the doctor entered a small boat and began paddling around the lake gathering up the dead birds and shooting a few live ones. Dr. Holtz reports that he had been so engrossed he did not notice that the boat was filling until about the center of the lake.

Drube suddenly raised to his feet and shouted "look out, doctor!". As Drube stepped toward the bow of the boat, Dr. Holtz, who was not on guard against the sudden motion was thrown over the side from his position in the stern. As he came to the surface, he remembered Drube had said he couldn't swim and called: "You stay with the boat, George, I'll try to make it to the shore". He then immediately headed for the bank, risking his own life by the act.

Drube, it appears, instead of staying in the boat, was either thrown or jumped from the other side, and as he went, evidently gave the boat a push with his feet so that when he came up, he was several feet distant from it. Dr. Holtz, thinking his companion was safe, and weighted down with his hip boots and heavy hunting togs, was having a hard struggle to make even slight headway toward the shore. He is not a strong swimmer.

Fritz Drube, when his brother came to the surface, called out "get to the boat!" and immediately took off his shoes and coat and plunged into the water to go to George's aid, but quickly became almost helpless from the ice cold water and with difficulty made his own way back to shore. After struggling a moment, George cried out "Fritz, help!" and sank from sight. But Fritz was already completely exhausted and benumbed and could do no more.

Seeing the serious situation of the doctor, John Merback waded from the shore to meet him and standing in icy water to his neck, was barely able to reach out and grab the hand of the thoroughly exhausted man as he gave up and went under. Mr. Merback in turn was so chilled that he was unable to get his burden to the shore and others of the party helped them both out. Dr. Holtz was unconscious for several minutes, but finally responded to the vigorous work of other hunters and was changed to dry clothing before a fire on the shore.

Owing to the fact that there had only been the one boat at the lake, it was necessary to make a trip to the house at some distance for another one before anything could be done in the way of rescue work or securing the body of Drube. This boat was rushed to the lake and a rough raft was thrown together to carry some of the rescuers. Chains and other grappling tools were used, but these were of no avail, and it was only when two garden rakes were wired together that the body was finally located and raised