

HASSELQUIST, JOHN
1917-January 1, 1919

Three deaths in quick succession in one family from mysterious cause has aroused the interest and apprehension of the entire community. The victims are Howard Hasselquist, his two year old son, John, and his brother, Stuard, aged 18 years.

The first death was the baby boy. He was playing about the house as usual on New Years day when he suddenly fell to the floor in a faint. It soon became evident that the child's legs were paralyzed and the parents started in a car to bring him to the hospital but he died on the way to town.

The next morning Stuard complained at breakfast time that he could not eat-could not swallow his food. He then drove to the hospital where a very thoro examination was made, his blood, pulse and temperature being normal, and no evidence of illness discovered other than a thickening of the tongue and a slight weakness which, in the total absence of disease indications, was attributed to the nerve shock of the sudden death of the baby. A few hours later, he returned to the hospital at which time his weakness had increased so he had to be helped to a room by the nurses.

Soon a paralysis began to creep over his body, beginning at his feet and gradually extending upward, and breathing became difficult from the swelling and hardening of the tongue and throat. The doctors and nurses started artificial respiration and the use of oxygen which was continued for four hours before the heart stopped beating in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Friday morning, 24 hours after Stuard was taken ill, Howard was stricken in the same manner and Dr. Fish was called in attendance. He died early Monday morning.

Saturday, while the two brothers were still alive, Dr. Corry was called from Chugwater and Dr. Johnston from Cheyenne, but they, like the local physicians, were baffled by the strange affliction and could no aid.

Sunday afternoon a post mortem examination was made on the body of Stuard, in the hope that some solution of the trouble might be found that would aid in saving the life of the older brother, but nothing tangible was discovered. Finding a few symptoms of arsenical poisoning parts of the body that might be effected by that or other poison were sent to Denver for a pathological examination.

Howard and Stuard Hasselquist were sons of Mr. and Mrs. A.E. Hasselquist who live on a farm south of Wheatland. Howard was nearly 26 years of age, having been born on March 4, 1893. His wife is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. Turpin of this city. For some time past, they had been living on Mr. Turpin's ranch on Cottonwood creek. Besides the child that died, they had a baby boy born October last.

Stuard graduated from Wheatland high school last May and in September went to Laramie to enter the S.A.T.C. At the close of the war, he returned home to help his brother a few days, and it was there he fell victim to the affliction that caused three deaths in rapid succession. Both young men were well and strong-fine specimens of physical manhood, esteemed and respected by a wide circle of friends.

Sunday, Mrs. Hasselquist, wife of Howard, fell ill. At first her illness appeared to be nervous collapse due to the deaths of her son, husband and brother-in-law, but Monday she developed symptoms of the same mysterious affliction that caused the other deaths.