

VANWART, MAYNARD ALVIN

April 20, 1911-August 6, 1939

A young man, whose home was said to be in Cheyenne, was drowned in Guernsey Dam lake Sunday afternoon about 1 o'clock. The Record was unable to learn his identity before going to press.

According to the meager reports available, he attempted to swim from Spotted Tail pier across the lake but sank in deep water before reaching his goal.

A diving suit was brought to the scene after repeated attempts with grappling hooks to locate his body had failed. The diver worked until 2 a.m. Monday, then began again soon after daybreak and searched throughout the day. The body had not yet been located Monday evening.

Sheriff Sutherland and Coroner C.S. Dennis were at the scene continually while the search was carried on.

The cold, placid waters of Guernsey reservoir gave up the dead body of Maynard VanWart, 29-year-old Cheyenne machinist, early Thursday morning after surface charges of dynamite had been used the previous evening in a final, determined effort to bring it to the surface.

VanWart's corpse was first sighted by H. Jenson, mess sergeant at the CCC side camp located at the reservoir. Charles P. Lundy, camp foreman, and Bob Singleton, CCC enrollee and life guard, helped Jenson bring the body to shore. Coroner C. Stewart Dennis was immediately notified of the discovery and drove to the site to take charge.

During the grim search, lasting almost four days, two divers had crossed and criss-crossed the bottom of the lake where the body sank and grappling hooks had been used in a fruitless hunt.

Frank Occhipinti, Cheyenne diver, was first called to the scene after the drowning at 12:30 p.m. Sunday. He made his first descent at 2 a.m. Monday and tried two other times after that. A strong wind made diving operations impossible after daybreak Monday morning because of the white capped waves it whipped up. Sheriff George Carroll and other Cheyenne officers who accompanied Occipinti were unable to anchor a boat in the two-foot waves.

Later in the day a call was sent thru to Pueblo, Colo. For Carl Ruminier, diver employed by the C.F. and I. Corp., his assistant, O.J. Meek and red Cross swimming and first-aid instructor, Charles DeVore. The three men drove all night and arrived at Guernsey about 8 a.m. Tuesday. Without rest Ruminier immediately began diving operations, going down for the first time at 9 o'clock. He continued the search until late that night and began again early Wednesday. Nearly exhausted by his exertions, Ruminier was finally forced to quit at 4:30 in the afternoon. Then it was decided to use several surface charges of dynamite in an effort to bring the body to the surface. The dynamite was furnished by the C.F. and I Corp., at Sunrise and the charges were set off Wednesday evening.

During the long, grueling vigil, VanWart's wife, Vera, to whom he was married