

Source 1: ???? Unknown publishing

## Otto L. Mertz and William Ballman Drowned at Lake

Pair With Mrs. Mertz and Mrs. Henrietta Meyer on Holiday Trip to Three Lakes, Lose Life After Boat Capsized Twice

Otto L. Mertz, president of the Greenfield Avenue Advancement association and head of the Mertz-Knipel Ford agency and William Ballman are dead as a result of one of the saddest and most peculiar water fatalities that have occurred in some time. The accident took place at Three Lakes, Wis., Wednesday noon.

Mr. Mertz and Mr. Ballman accompanied by Mrs. Mertz and Mrs. Henrietta Meyer, her mother, left for Three Lakes Last Saturday on a holiday trip to the home of Welcome Meyer, brother-in-law to Mr. Mertz. On Wednesday the four went on a fishing excursion. They were fishing in deep water about twenty feet from the shore when Otto in casting upset the boat.

### Upset Again

The four righted the boat and all got inside with the exception of Otto. When he attempted to climb in the boat was again upset. Mr. Ballman's clothing became entangled in the Evinrude motor that was attached to the boat and he was dragged under the water.

Otto told his wife to go for help to rescue his uncle. She swam to shore and met two young men who could not swim but with their assistance and the aid of Mrs. Meyer who had remained on the upturned boat. The body was dragged to shore. Ballman's body was underneath and he was drowned. Mr. Mertz's body was recovered almost instantly but life was found extinct. It is believed that he died of heart disease.

### Funeral Saturday

The bodies of the two arrived in West Allis on Thursday. Burial will take place Saturday in charge of the Rev. Gustav Stearns, pastor of the Lutheran church of the Ascension.

Mr. Mertz was one of the best known, most popular and most progressive businessmen in West Allis and his loss is felt by the entire community. He was born at Reeseville Wis., thirty-four years ago and has been in business in West Allis for over a decade. He first kept the barbershop at present connected with the Commercial hotel. Later he went into the confectionary business where the Arc parlor is now located. Then he took over the agency of the Alemite Lubrication System. Then started the Mertz Tire Shop of which he was still part owner and a short time ago together with Mr. Knipple bought out the Tobin-Sutton Ford Agency.

When the Greenfield Avenue Advancement association was formed some time ago he was unanimously elected president as it was felt that his business ability and his desire to boost everything that pertained to West Allis made him the man to put the new organization on its feet.



Mr. Mertz was a member of the Excelsior lodge, Order of Masons. They will have charge of the funeral Saturday afternoon, assisted by the Rev. Stearns.

Mr. Ballman, 62 years old, who was brother of Mrs. Meyer, mother of Mrs. Mertz was well known in West Allis. He was one of the city's best-known saloonkeepers, but at the time of his death he was retired and was living with Mr. Mertz.

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(By the way: the little clipping at the lower left of the original photocopy is for Otto and Norma Mertz's sister-in-law. Norma's brother Arthur Meyer married Noraine 'Nora' Davis in 1912. She died of complications one month after giving birth to son Donald John Meyer in 1927.

Transcript: Meyer: Sunday, Nov. 13, at the residence 1211 53<sup>rd</sup> st., Nora Meyer (nee Davis) aged 38 years, beloved wife of Arthur E., mother of Norayne and Donald, daughter of Mrs. Emma Davis. Sister of Oak, Richard, Irving and Mrs. George Mattern. Funeral from Borgwardt funeral home. National av., between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. Internment Forest Home cemetery.) Unknown publication source

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Source 2: ??? Unknown publishing

## Goes Back into Lake for 3

Saves Mother But Husband and Uncle Perish as Many Look On.

A story of a woman's bravery centering around Mrs. Otto L Mertz, of West Allis went down in the history of Wisconsin tragedies today when word of a double drowning at Three Lakes yesterday reached the city.

Mrs. Mertz, on the verge of motherhood, forsook the safety of the shore which she had reached after a tiring struggle, tied a rope around her waist and returned to the spot where her husband and uncle had gone down and where her mother was fast losing her hold on an overturned craft. Fastening the rope to her mother's arm, Mrs. Mertz then recovered the bodies of the two men, made them fast and was dragged to shore.

The victims of the tragedy were Otto L Mertz 34, and William Bollmann, 62 both of 467 Sixty-fourth av., West Allis and widely known in business and civic circles of the suburb. A theory was advanced that Mr. Bollman died of heart trouble, brought on by the shock of falling into the water.



### Man Loses Balance

The two men with Mrs. Mertz, 30, and her mother Mrs. Henrietta Meyer, 59, were in a small row boat propelled by an attachable engine fishing less than thirty feet from shore, when Mr. Mertz in casting his line lost his balance and fell into the water.

In reaching to grasp him as he went over the gunwale, his companion caused the boat to capsize. Their cries attracted the attention of other anglers and those on shore, but no help was offered when Mr. Mertz succeeded in righting the craft and getting back aboard, dragging the two women in after him.

Mr. Bollmann, however, failed to reappear on the surface, and the boat was upset a second time when Mr. Mertz went over the side to rescue the older man, who apparently had become entangled in the propeller.

### Swims Ashore

Mrs. Mertz, finding herself in the water for the second time helped her mother to grasp the side of the overturned craft and then swam to shore.

Two young men who were among the witnesses of the accident had procured a rope in the meantime and, with one end tied about her body, Mrs. Mertz made her way to the boat. Efforts to revive the men failed.

The bodies arrived at West Allis this morning. Mr Mertz was president of the Greenfield Avenue Advancement association of West Allis and president of the Mertz-Knipple automobile agency. He was a Mason, being a member of the Excelsior lodge. Besides his widow, he is survived by his father, A.H. Mertz of Reeseville, a sister Edna and a brother, Larey. Mr. Bollmann was unmarried.

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July 5, 1922  
12:00 P.M.

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## Seek Carnegie Award for Heroic Mother

West Allis Woman Saves Mother and Recovers Bodies of Drowning Men

Rhineland, Wis., July 15 — Friends of Mrs. Otto L. Mertz are seeking to gain the award of a Carnegie medal to her in recognition of her heroism in saving her mother and in endeavoring to save her husband and uncle from drowning at Three Lakes.

Mrs. Mertz, nearing motherhood, forsook the safety of the shore which she had reached after a tiring struggle, tied a rope around her waist, and returned to the spot where her husband and uncle had gone down and where her mother was fast losing her hold on an overturned craft. Fastening the rope to her mother's arm, Mrs. Mertz then recovered the bodies of the two men, made them fast, and was dragged to shore.

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## Two Die When Boat Capsizes

One Man Drowned, Other Killed by Heart Disease

A family fishing party at Three Lakes, near Mercer, Wis. ended in tragedy Wednesday. William Bollman 62 was drowned, and Otto Mertz, 33 died of heart trouble caused by the excitement of trying to save his companion. Both men lived at 463 Sixty-fourth av., West Allis.

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Mertz, Mrs. August Meyer, Mr. Bollman and others were visiting at the home of Welcome Meyer, brother-in-law of Mr. Mertz. The four went fishing Wednesday afternoon and Mr. Mertz fell out of the boat while landing a fish. The water was not deep and he climbed back in again with the assistance of the others, but in doing so capsized the boat.

### Coat Hooks on Motor

Mr. Bollman's coat caught in an outboard motor and Mr. Metz, seeing that he was in difficulties dove down to extract him. The rescuer was stricken by heart failure and Mr. Bollman drowned. Mrs. August Meyer narrowly escaped a like fate. She was clinging to the boat, but slipping off when Mrs. Mertz, who was wading ashore perceived her plight and returned to help her to safety.

The information regarding the deaths was received in a telegram to Frank X. Koelsch, undertaker, 6307 Greenfield av. Mrs. Meyer and Mrs. Mertz arrived later and told of the accident. The bodies arrived Thursday morning, accompanied by Arthur Meyer, brother-in-law of Mr. Mertz.

### Employee of Gimbel's

Mr. Bollman was employed by Gimbel Bros. Mr. Mertz operated a West Allis tire shop and was part owner of the Mertz-Knipel Ford agency. He was president of the Greenfield av. Business Men's association.

The funeral will be held at 2:30 p.m. Friday with services at the home and Forest Home chapel. The bodies will be cremated at Forest Home cemetery.

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Source 5: The Pine, the Plow, and the Pioneer a History of Three Lakes, Clearwater Lake, Gagen, Hiles, and Monico, Wisconsin 1881-1986, Vol. II; Three Lakes Historical Society; Pages 88-91.  
Separate attachment.