

Drowning Death of Young Leland Whiting

Leland Whiting
b. 25 Apr 1898
d. 01 Dec 1910

Son of
Charles Llewellyn Whiting b. 1866
Clara Lorilla Oaks b. 1872

Leland Whiting died in an ice skating accident on Lake Clitherall in 1910. Here is the story from *Old Clitherall's Storybook*, page 27-28:

A Life Lost -- Another Risked

"Our Schoolmate Dear" was the inscription in artistic lettering above the casket of little twelve-year-old Leland Whiting, a school boy of District One, at his funeral December 3, 1910.

Leland lived with his parents, Chas. L. and Clara Whiting, in old Clitherall and attended school in the village. After school one night he, with three schoolmates, Robert and Verne Whiting and Lynn Fletcher, skated down the lake from town and on past his own home. Out in the lake south of John Murdock's Leland skated into an air-hole, eight feet wide.

We do not desire to make vivid the awfulness of it all, but there in the icy water Leland gave up this life, so dear to all of earth's children, for the better life beyond.

His cousin Robert attempted to save him, while Lynn and Verne hurried away to summon help.

John Murdock, being the first to hear the alarm, ran out with a rope, removed his cap, shoes and coat, and telling the boys to throw him the rope when he came up, plunged head first into the water -- a depth of fourteen feet. He swam the lower six or seven feet with difficulty owing to the heavy pressure of water beneath him. He discovered the body and without touching his feet to the bottom swam on with it, necessarily going a little ahead in rising so that he saw he was coming up under the sheet of ice, but being able to detect the open surface he turned and reached it safely.

After getting out onto solid ice and while attempting to force the water from Leland's lungs, Leland's father and others reached the place and took the boy immediately to the house where restoratives were used with loving diligence by parents and doctor, but all in vain, the exposure having been too long and severe.

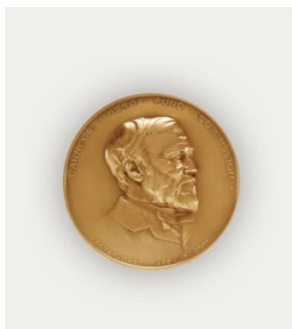
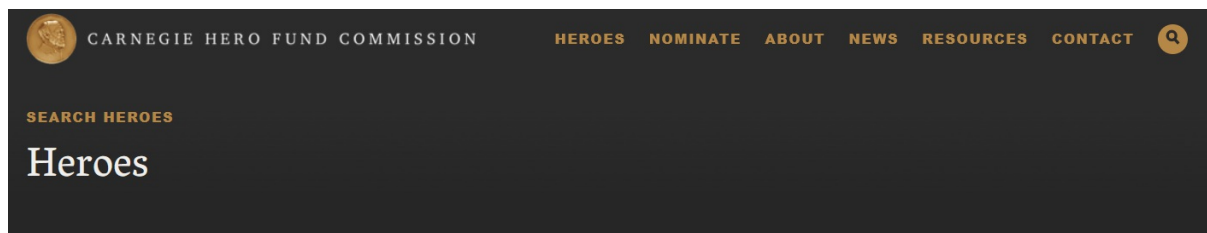
Leland was a great-grandson of the pioneer Chauncey Whiting, and his death was the first case of drowning in Clitherall Lake.

Some time after this, through gratitude and courtesy, Chas L. Whiting and Rev. S. H. Sharpless reported what John Murdock had done to the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, who, after sending their agent, John Benitz, here to investigate the case, awarded him a medal - one of the many for which Mr. Andrew Carnegie has made provision to be rewarded for deeds of heroism similar to this one.

The medal is of bronze, about four inches in diameter, bearing Mr. Carnegie's profile on one side and on the other the statement of to whom and why the medal was awarded.

The community out of respect presented Mr. Murdock with a gold watch appropriately engraved.

Here is documentation of the medal from the Carnegie Hero Fund website (<https://www.carnegiehero.org>):



John Murdock

Clitherall, MN

John Murdock, 35, farmer, attempted to save Leland V. Whiting, 12, from drowning, Clitherall, Minnesota, December 1, 1910. Murdock, fully dressed, with the temperature at zero, dived to the bottom of an eight-foot-wide air hole in the ice on Clitherall Lake, where Leland had sunk in water 14 feet deep. He caught Leland by the coat and swam to the surface with him, finding it necessary to swim about three feet toward the middle, to avoid coming up under the thick ice at the edge of the hole. Several boys threw Murdock a rope and helped get him and Leland out. Leland could not be revived. 5950-491

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Here is an example of such a medal to give an idea of its size:

