

DERKSON, Jeannette and HOPE, Reta Rosanna and James Sherman

On August 14, 1933, a tragedy occurred at Sutherland Beach on the South Saskatchewan River, which at the time was approximately three miles from the City of Saskatoon. An article in the *Star Phoenix*, dated August 15, 1933, reported the story under the headline, “*THREE CITY CHILDREN DROWN IN RIVER*”.

Jeannette Derkson was a student at Victoria School, where she had completed Grade 5. Reta Hope was a student going into Grade 4 at Wilson School, while James Hope was to start school that year. The fathers of both families were among the large number of unemployed at the time.

The three children had gone to Sutherland Beach with Jeannette's¹ younger sister, Dorothy, to spend the day. Normally Mr. Hope would have accompanied them, but he was unable to that day. Apparently, James Hope went into the water and found himself in what was described as either quicksand or a pothole. Upon calling for help, his sister Reta went to his assistance, only to find herself in difficulty. Another youth, Raymond Gracewood went to aid them, taking hold of their hands. When the Hope children saw Jeannette coming to help them, they took their hands from Gracewood and sank under the water. Jeannette then went further into the river and also went under.

The Hope children were initially interred in a different location in Woodlawn Cemetery than Jeannette Derkson. A few weeks after the funerals, they were all moved to Block 76, Lot 30. The monument reads:



SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
JEANNETTE DERKSON
AGED 14 YEARS.
RETA ROSANNA HOPE
AGED 10 YEARS.
JAMES SHERMAN HOPE
AGED 6 YEARS.
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES AT
SUTHERLAND BEACH ON
AUGUST 14 1933
JEANNETTE AND RETA GAVE
THEIR LIVES IN AN HEROIC
ATTEMPT TO RESCUE JAMES
FROM DROWNING

¹The *Star Phoenix* referred to the Derkson child as Janet throughout the article. The burial permit spells her name as Jeanette, and it is spelled Jeannette on the monument.