

JOHN J. HASSARD, Jr. (1872-1890)

February 1890 (*Barnstable Patriot*, Cape Cod newspaper)

Narrow Escape From Drowning

Two of our young men, Fred Young¹ and John J Hassard [Jr.], went in a boat Monday last, February 17 [1890], to get some clams that were left in sacks when unexpectedly the rope snapped in twain and Young was thrown overboard by the recoil.

In attempting to get into the boat again Young upset it and Hassard too was turned into the water, which was cold as ice.

The boat was more than a mile from shore and the men were clad in heavy winter garments, which grew heavier as the water soaked into them.

The attempt to swim could not be made with any chance of safety and they hung on the over turned boat as their best hope.

After more than an hour had passed in a vain attempt to attract attention, the unfortunates caught sight of William Saint coming out of his mother's house, which is near the shore of the Bay.²

His attention was secured after desperate efforts and Saint at once began to save the disconsolate.

He was obliged to go a half a mile after a boat and then row to the wreck.

But the helpful youth did all that and managed to bring the castaways to land, nearly exhausted.

He had to carry Hassard in his arms, faint and dripping, up the steep bank.

How he managed such a heavy load is surprising, but many things are possible to a good-hearted, resolute soul.

It is a call worthy of the notice of the Humane Society.



John J. Hassard, Jr. (1872-1890) was the only son of John J. Hassard and Sarah A. Hassard of Brewster. Less than a year after his near drowning (related above), he was accidentally shot to death in October 1890 at age 19. His headstone (left) in the Brewster Cemetery says he was “Shot in the Bay,” perhaps in a duck-hunting expedition (?) (*Why else would he be out on the Bay in October with a gun? Why did his parents let him go back out on the wintry Bay after the clamming disaster?*) He died the day after the shooting, indicating someone must have been with him “in the Bay” and brought him ashore where he lingered from his wounds, probably at the family home on Lower Road. His parents and four sisters survived him in Brewster, but with his death, the named Hassard lineage died out with him. (*M.H. Robinson, 2012*)

¹ Fred Young was the farm manager for Augustus L. Thorndike’s *Pinecroft* on Lower Road. He lived north of Lower Road near the Bay. Perhaps John Hassard’s father, listed as farm laborer in the 1880 Census, also worked for Thorndike. Perhaps John, Jr. did too; his 1890 death certificate listed him as “single, farmer.”

² Presumably, where Saint’s Landing is now, just west of Hassard’s and Young’s farms.