

West Community Council
January 21, 2013

TO: Chair and Members of West Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed
Jane Fraser, Director, Planning and Infrastructure

DATE: December 16, 2012

SUBJECT: Commemorative Naming – Park Bridge at Captain William Spry

ORIGIN

December 10, 2012, West Community Council:

Motion passed directing staff to prepare a report to name the Bridge at Captain William Spry Community Centre Park after Edith Irene (Reenie) Slauenwhite.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order No. 46, respecting HRM Asset Naming Policy, allows for the naming of streets, parks and buildings. Amending the policy to allow for park bridges as recommended, would formalize the existing practice.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended:

1. That the West Community Council approve the bridge name, Irene (Reenie) Slauenwhite Bridge, for the unnamed bridge that spans MacIntosh Run and connects the Herring Cove Road to the Captain William Spry Community Centre; and
2. That the West Community Council request Regional Council to amend Administrative Order No. 46 to include park bridges within the HRM Asset Naming Policy.

BACKGROUND

The Asset Naming Policy (Administrative Order No. 46) allows any person or group to apply for a commemorative name for HRM assets, particularly streets, parks or buildings. The policy sets out a framework for the consideration for naming of streets, parks, buildings and their features. Park Bridges were not included within Administrative Order 46; however, the guidelines established under the Order are generally what staff use as best practice for those elements outside the policy. While naming for assets within Administrative Order 46 are submitted to Regional Council twice a year for approval, the practice has been to have those park assets falling outside of the policy, approved through the appropriate Community Council.

Owing to the substantial size and investment of park pedestrian bridges being built, staff does feel that bringing these bridges under Administrative Order 46 in the future, for consistency, would be appropriate.

DISCUSSION

A request and background material has been received from the family of Irene Slauenwhite to have the pedestrian bridge spanning the Macintosh Run between Herring Cove Road and the Captain William Spry Centre, given the Commemorative Name of Irene (Reenie) Slauenwhite Bridge (see biography in Attachment A). The request is in recognition of the heroic act by Irene Slauenwhite at the age of ten to save the life of her friend Miriam McNeil, aged nine, from drowning in the Run at the present location of the bridge. The Run was in flood stage at the time and fast moving. Two months later, in August 1937, Irene Slauenwhite was recognized for her heroism and awarded a Governor General's Award from the Royal Canadian Humane Association. The submission by the family includes evidence that Irene Slauenwhite continued to live a constructive and community minded life until her death in 2000.

Commemorative Names:

Commemorative names recognize individual persons, groups of people and geographic features. The bridge was constructed as a component of the park adjacent to Captain William Spry Community Centre in 2007 and provides a popular connection between the Centre and Herring Cove Road. In keeping with the best practices found in Administrative Order 46, Section 16. f, the individual has been deceased for a minimum of one year, and Section 17. C, the nominated individual(s) shall have risked his/her life to save or protect others.

From the evidence provided by the family and other supporters, Irene Slauenwhite's actions would be deemed to represent an example to others and therefore, are worthy of commemorative naming. She lived most of her life in the community of Spryfield where the bridge is located and was well known. The proximity to the Captain William Spry Pool where children learn the value of swimming is noted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are minimal costs associated with the administration of the Asset Naming Policy including amendments from time to time. Costs associated with assigning the name to the bridge will be covered under approved funds in operating account W700-6399, not to exceed more than \$1000 dollars.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Any member of the community is welcome to submit applications for commemorative names for any community in HRM. Ongoing promotion of the Asset Naming Policy has included the creation of printed marketing material and engaging local interest groups, schools, universities and Royal Canadian Legions.

In the case of the proposed naming of the bridge over MacIntosh Run, eight letters of recommendation, two newspaper articles copies, and a copy of the Honorary Testimonial were received.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications which have been identified.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Western Community Council could choose to not name the bridge.
2. Western Community Council could request Regional Council to consider an amendment to the Asset Naming Policy to include park bridges and then to consider the naming of the bridge. This is not the recommended course as that process could take a year.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Irene Slauenwhite Biography and Submission by Supporters for commemorative naming of the bridge.

**Commemorative Naming – Park Bridge at Captain William Spry
West Community Council Report**

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January 21, 2013

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Robert Jahncke, Real Estate and Land Management - 490-4002

Original Signed

Report Approved by: Peter Stickings, Manager Real Estate and Land Management

Original Signed

Financial Approval by: Greg Keefe, Director of Finance and Information Technology/CFO, 490-6308

Attachment A – Irene (Reenie) Slauenwhite's Biography

Request

- Park Bridge

Geography

- MacIntosh Run Captain William Spry Community Centre

Criteria

- Individual(s) who have demonstrated excellence, courage or exceptional service to the citizens of Halifax Regional Municipality, the Province of Nova Scotia and/or Canada.
- Individual(s) who have risked his/her life to save or protect others.

Biography

Irene (Reenie) Slauenwhite was born in 1927 in Jollimore, Nova Scotia and at a young age moved with her family to Spryfield where she became known for her excellent swimming skills. On June 12, 1937, Reenie and her friends were playing near the MacIntosh Run, in the vicinity of where the trail bridge is today, when Reenie's friend Miriam McNeil fell in the water and was caught in the current of the 10 metre wide river. Without hesitation Reenie plunged into the water and saved her friend from drowning. With quickly arriving adult assistance, Miriam was brought back to consciousness. Irene and Miriam remained friends throughout their school years. In the 1940's and early 1950's, Irene owned and operated Renie's Tearoom on the corner of what is now Dentith Road and Herring Cove Road. Irene then moved to Toronto married and had three children, Starr, Joanne and Joey. As Irene Bogue, she later returned to live in Spryfield, always a safe haven for her. One of her favourite times of the year was August when she would pick blueberries on the barrens. Iren died January 2000, in her 73rd year.

Awards:

- Governor General's Honorary Testimonial from the Royal Canadian Humane Association for heroic action and presence of mind in the rescue of Miriam MacNeil, from drowning in the MacIntosh Runs, Spryfield, Nova Scotia, June 12, 1937. Presented August 5, 1937.

[REDACTED]
Halifax, NS
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr. Peter Bigelow
Manager Real Property Planning
Halifax Regional Municipality

Dear Mr. Bigelow:

I am writing to you today to ask for your consideration in the naming of the bridge which spans the MacIntosh Run, & connects the Herring Cove Road to The Captain William Spry Community Centre in Spryfield.

We hope that you will assist us in honoring our mother Edith Irene "Reenie" Slauenwhite.

Born in Jollimore in 1927 to Mr. & Mrs. Ben Slauenwhite, Reenie eventually moved with her family to Spryfield. As a young girl, she became known for her excellent swimming skills. One day while she and her friends were playing near the runs Reenie heard one of her friends cry out that Miriam McNeil "Mimi" was caught in the current of the runs. Without hesitation Reenie dove into the water and saved her friend from drowning. For this effort at the tender age of 10, Reenie received the Governor General's Award from the Royal Canadian Humane Association.

In 1947 at only 20 years old, Reenie opened a small café "Reenie's Tearoom" at the corner of Dentith Road & Herring Cove Road and started up & sponsored a softball team. Reenie also ran a fledgling taxi service which some believe later became Spryfield Taxi. Eventually, she moved to Toronto where she married & started a family. In 1970, Reenie returned to her beloved community where she continued to raise her 3 children as a single mother. She also had a great love for picking blueberries and many of our friends would call her "The Blueberry Lady". She managed to obtain contracts from Dominion Stores, Sobey's and Superstore for all the wild blueberries she could pick and did so for many years. She also became known for baking great blueberry and apple pies which she would sell at local flea markets. Reenie also enjoyed helping others in her community, most notably assisting many of our seniors with their day-to-day needs such as cleaning, groceries & yard work.

Sadly, in early 2000 at age 73, Reenie quietly passed away in her sleep.

Although we wish we could have honored this true Spryfielder while she was still alive, it is with the greatest respect & love for our mother that we ask for your deepest consideration of this application. It is also important to note that the location of the bridge is significant in that it is where the Slauenwhite homestead once stood and is very close to the spot where Reenie performed her heroic deed.

We are also enclosing supporting documents as well as letters of endorsement from several dignitaries who are in favor of naming the bridge:

"The Irene (Reenie) Slauenwhite Memorial Bridge"

We thank you for taking the time to review this application, & hope that together we can soon make this dream a reality.

Best regards,

Dorothy S. Bogue & Family.



Captain William Spry Community Centre
16 Sussex Street
Halifax, NS B3R 1N9

Canadian Registered Charity No. 876763103RR0001

May 3, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Naming of the Bridge that Spans the MacIntosh Runs in front of the Captain William Spry Community Centre

Please accept this letter as our support and endorsement of the proposed naming of the bridge which spans the MacIntosh Runs in front of the Captain William Spry Community Centre in honour of Ms. Irene Slauenwhite. In 1937, at a spot very close to where the bridge now sits, nine year old child, Miriam MacNeil, was playing by the Runs and fell in. Ms. Slauenwhite, who was also nine years old, fearlessly jumped in the water and saved the child. She received the Royal Canadian Humane Society Certificate for saving Ms. MacNeil.

Our historian and archivist have been researching the history of Ms. Slauenwhite. Besides this rescue, by all accounts, it is apparent that Ms. Slauenwhite was a well respected member of the community on all fronts. It would be more than appropriate to honour this piece of Spryfield's history and heritage in such a manner.

Sincerely,

Leslie Harnish, President
Mainland South Heritage Society

RE: Email to Starr Bogue

From: Matheson, Lynn (mathesl@halifax.ca)

Sent: June-27-12 9:17:28 AM

To: Adams, Steve (adamss@halifax.ca)

Cc: [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern:

I write to you with respect to the naming of the pedestrian bridge which spans the McIntosh Run from the Captain William Spry Centre to Herring Cove Road. This request has been made by Starr Bogue, on behalf of her late mother, Irene (née Slaunwhite). I offer the following in support of this request.

On June 12, 1937, Irene's friend, Mim McNeil fell into the Run. She couldn't swim, and was flailing helplessly in the water. Irene jumped into the water, grabbed Mim and brought her to safety. Irene's uncle, Sergeant Jim Pratt helped to expel water from her little lungs and she regained consciousness.

Irene's heroic actions were nationally recognized. It would be fitting that her efforts were recognized locally, as well. As Irene passed away in January 2001, it would be appropriate to honour her by naming this bridge after her.

I am pleased to support Starr's efforts to honour her mom, and am honoured to offer this recommendation in support of the unselfish act of a ten-year-old girl.

Sincerely,
S. Adams



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

Constituency Office
47 Williams Lake Road
Halifax NS B3P 1S9

June 11, 2012

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to add my support for the suggestion of naming the new McIntosh Run bridge at Herring Cove Road and Sussex Street, in memory of Irene Slaunwhite. In **1937**, nine-year-old Miriam MacNeil fell into the McIntosh Run near this point. Miriam was unable to swim, and was only saved by the bravery of her friend Irene, who jumped into the water and brought her to shore. She received the **Royal Canadian Humane Association award** for this.

Both girls grew up to marry and raise families in Spryfield. Irene operated Renee's Tea Room Fish and Chips for many years on Dentith Road not far from this spot on the McIntosh Run. It would be very appropriate to commemorate this local history by dedicating this bridge to the memory of **Irene Slaunwhite**, who died in 2000.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Michele Raymond.

Michele Raymond
MLA Halifax Atlantic

CLYDE A. PAUL & ASSOCIATES INC.
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

CLYDE A. PAUL, B.C.M.S. L.L.B.
RYAN P. BRENNAN, B.A. L.L.B.
HON. JOHN BUCHANAN, Q.C., B.C. COUSSE

June 6, 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Re: - Naming of Bridge spanning the MacIntosh Run in front of
The Captain William Spry Community Centre

It is with great pleasure that I have been asked to lend support to the concept of naming the above bridge which crosses the MacIntosh in memory and honour of the late Irene Slauenwhite.

Ms. Slauenwhite was a well known and respected member of the community, and in fact had been a client of mine. She was known for her community spirit and involvement in many community affairs, all done in an effort in her own small way to make the Spryfield Community a better place in which to live.

It is my opinion that naming the bridge in her honour and to her memory would be a most fitting gesture, and would be a lasting tribute to her having saved the life of one Ms. MacNeil many years ago near the very spot where the bridge is located.

I lend my full support to this gesture and I commend those responsible for taking this initiative to pay tribute to someone who made a distinct difference to her community.

Yours truly,



CLYDE A. PAUL & ASSOCIATES
CLYDE A. PAUL

SUITE D 349 HERRING COVE ROAD HALIFAX NS B3R 1V9

Phone: (902) 477-2518

Fax: (902) 479-1482

FW: Aunt Lenta's statement about yur mom

From: starr b [REDACTED]
Sent: April-24-12 1:13:39 PM
To: joseph_bogue [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Aunt Lenta's statement about yur mom
Date: Mon, 23 Apr 2012 22:00:08 -0300

Hi Star,

This is what your Aunt Lenta has written about your mom:

Irene was loved by everyone in Spryfield, from the time I can remember, being just a year younger than her. When she was about eleven the police came to the house to ask if she would go with them to Kidstones Lake, as there was a young boy who was missing and they wanted Irene to see if she would go diving to help search for him. The police would look after her, there was quite a write-up about that. Irene loved taking children out to the lake or at the runs behind our house to teach them to swim. Irene was very well liked by all and I felt so blessed and lucky to have had Irene not only as a sister but also my very best friend.

Lenta Kruchka

If you need anything else just email and I will tell Lenta to add more, or whatever.

Take Care,
Brenda

April 13th
2012

To Whom I May Concern.

I have known Irene Bogue, for over 30 years. She was a kind and caring individual, who was joyful and had a beautiful smile for everyone she met. Many years before her passing, God completely changed her life, she was like a brand new lady. "Renee" as everyone would call her was a very special friend to me and many others.

Renee loved her children – Starr, Joanne & Joey. She would speak very highly of them and wanted the best in life for them.

Renee, was like an older sister to me. We would talk on the phone for hours at a time about life in general. I still miss her especially come blueberry season, as she loved picking blueberries. We would go far back in the woods and she would always find her way out by the position of the sun. We would always pick enough for some delicious blueberry pies and blueberry grunt.

Many years ago Reenie, saved a young girls life, (*Miriam McNeil*) from drowning in the MacIntosh Runs, in Spryfield. That was what Reenie was all about – helping people in need and being there for them when they needed a friend.

Renee, was an amazing lady and an inspiration to all who were fortunate enough to have met her

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Barbara Arsenault
[REDACTED]

April 10, 2012

I have known Rennie
Blawwhite since I was
about 10 yrs old. 65 yrs ago
My brother was 12 yrs older
than I was & she (Rennie)
hung around with his crowd
Rennie ^{lived} in a house on the
Herring Cove Rd just past
the bridge.

Rennie opened a Tea room
at the Pine Grove where
the lights are now. Call Rennie
Tea Room. There was a little
mall there Drug store. Monts
oil Co. Barber Shop & The
blue room.

Rennie had a girls base ball
team named after the tea room
Our Crest was a tea cup

+ Sances with Rennie tea
room on it I was only 14
the youngest on the team
we played Kline Height girl
team.

(Dolores) Ridge Sport
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~



DISCOVERING OUR PAST

Spryfield girl saved from drowning in McIntosh Run

by Iris V. Shea, Historian
Mainland South Heritage Society

The headlines in the "Halifax Mail" on 11 July 1937 read "Spryfield Girl Saved from Drowning by 10-Year Old Playmate." On 12 June 1937 ten-year old Irene Slauenwhite and her friend, nine-year old Miriam (Mimi/Mim) McNeil, and Mim's brother, Burton, were part of a group of children playing near McIntosh Run. Irene (Renie), born in 1928, was the daughter of Benjamin and Dorothy (Pratt) Slauenwhite; Mim, born in 1929, was the daughter of Dan and Maude McNeil, all of Spryfield.

The Run was located behind the Slauenwhite house on the Herring Cove Road, the same body of water seen today along the driveway of the Captain William Spry Community Centre. This section of McIntosh Run contains very little water at present, but in 1937 the Run was like a wide river, one of the reasons Mrs. Slauenwhite made certain all of her children learned to swim at an early age.

On that particular Saturday afternoon in June, the fast current of the rain-swollen river came close to claiming the life of Mim McNeil. When Mim fell from a rock into the McIntosh Run, only her brother saw her. He yelled out that his sister was drowning, but by this time Mim was caught up in the current and Irene could not see her. When she finally saw Mim's head bobbing above the water

about 20 yards downstream, and knowing Mim could not swim, Irene knew she had to act immediately. She plunged into the Run, which at that point was about 30 feet wide, kicking off her shoes as she struck the water. Mim was going down for the third time when her rescuer managed to grab the straps of her sun suit and pulled her to the opposite shore where it was not as deep.

Irene's uncle, Sergeant Jim Pratt, arrived at the scene as Irene was dragging her unconscious playmate up the opposite bank through the bushes. He jumped into the flowing river, crossing to the other side to help. When the unconscious child began rolling down the bank toward the Run, Sergeant Pratt caught her and put her over his shoulder to expel water from her lungs. A doctor was called to assist and the child regained consciousness.

For her heroic action and presence of mind in the rescue of Miriam McNeil, Irene Slauenwhite received a Certificate of Honorary Testimonial from the Royal Canadian Humane Association, presented to her by the Honourable Robert Irwin, Lieutenant Governor

of Nova Scotia. Both Mim and Irene and their families attended the ceremony.

The heroic rescue created great excitement and admiration as people learned of it. The story was also carried in some United States

will remember Irene Slauenwhite as an adult when, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, she owned and operated Renie's Tearoom on the corner of what is now Dentith Road and Herring Cove Road. In the 1950s, Irene moved to Toronto where she married and where her three children, Starr, Joanne and Joey, were born. As Irene Bogue, she later returned to live in Spryfield, always a safe haven for her. One of her favourite times of the year was August when she would pick blueberries on the barrens. Irene died in January 2001, in her 73rd year.

Mim McNeil worked at Sears in her adult life. Her father was Spryfield's first fire chief and her mother operated the post office from their house on the Herring Cove Road. Mim married Clyde McAvoy and lived most of her married life in Herring Cove. She never learned to swim and had a lifelong fear of the water. She did, however, make certain her four children, Gary, Ross, Daniel and Colleen, learned to swim at a young age. Mim died in February of 2002, one year after the death of her childhood friend, Irene Slauenwhite. Her eight grandchildren were her pride and joy.



Miriam (Mim) McNeil, Irene (Renie) Slauenwhite and Lt. Gov. R. Irwin, 1937

newspapers.

Irene and Mim remained friends throughout their school years. Many local residents



Royal Canadian Humane Association.

PATRON—HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA

HONORARY TESTIMONIAL

The Committee on Awards, having considered and reported the

The Royal Canadian Humane Association

Has Unanimously Resolved that

Irene Slaenwhite

is justly entitled to this Honorary Testimonial of the Association

Awarded for

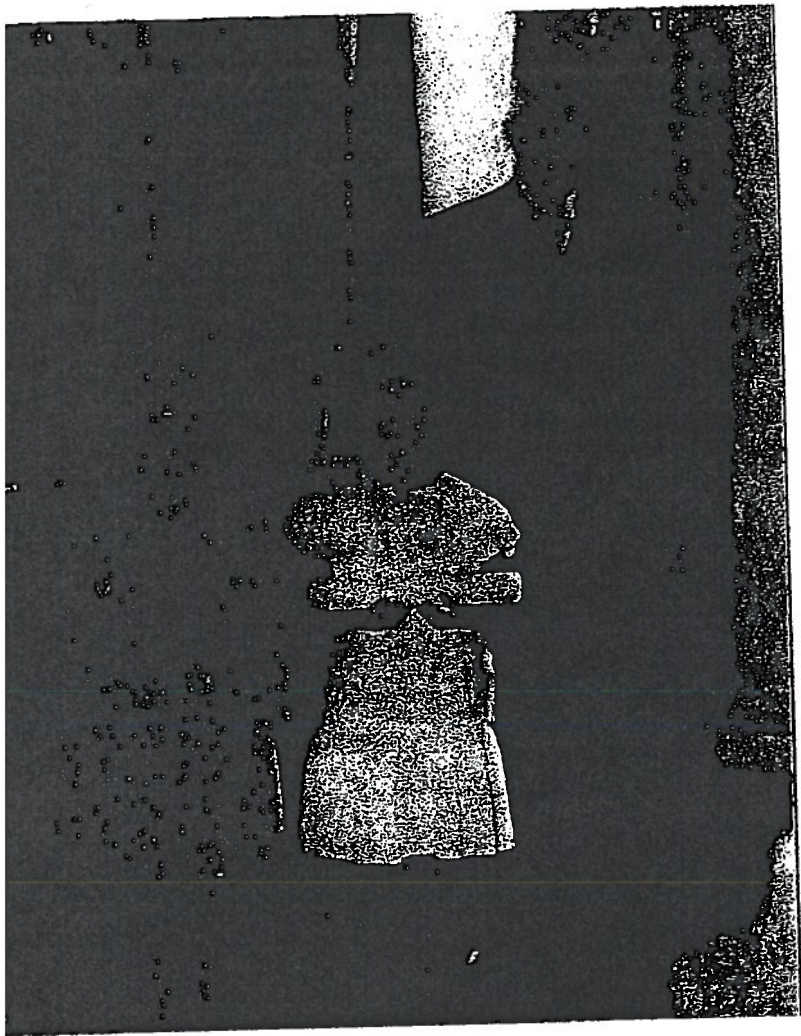
*Heroic action and presence of mind in the rescue of
Miriam McNeil, from drowning in the Mackintosh Run
Spryfield, N.S., June 12, 1937.*

B. M. L. C.
Honorary Secretary-Treasurer
Wm. J. L. C.
Chairman Board of Governors



A. M. L. C.
Pres.

Dated at Hamilton this 5th of August 1937



SPRYFIELD GIRL SAVED FROM DROWNING IN SWIFT CURRENT BY 10-YEAR-OLD PLAYMATE

RISKS LIFE TO RESCUE COMPANION

Miriam MacNeill, 9
Spryfield, is Rescued From Macintosh Run by Irene Slaunwhite

RESCUED from the fast current of the rain-swollen Macintosh Run at Spryfield on Saturday, Miriam MacNeill, nine-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dan MacNeill of that village, today owed her life to the courage of a 10-year-old girl-companion.

Today, Irene Slaunwhite, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Slaunwhite, a being arrested as the village's heroine in the dramatic rescue of her playmate made before the eyes of a dozen witnesses.

The two girls were playing with Miriam's brother, Horton, on the banks of the Run early Saturday afternoon. The spot, which is just back of the Slaunwhite house, is a favorite one for the children of the neighborhood and the scene of many a happy hour.

ROBBING IN CURRENT

SUDDENLY Burton called "Mimi's drowning." Irene looked around, saw nothing of "Mimi," then as the little boy repeated his cry, yards down the Run she saw Mimi's head bob to the surface. Running part way to the house she shouted to her mother.

"But Renee," her mother cried, "I can't swim, you know what to do." The youngster accepted the challenge without another word, and with no thought for her own possible fate she plunged into the river, which is about 30 feet wide at that point, kicked off her shoes as she struck the water and flung out for

Mimi, who by that time was on the point of going under for the third time. Her little rescuer, who had grasped the drowning child by the front straps of her sun suit and made for shore.

GIRL UNCONSCIOUS

At the opposite shore of the river is a low artificial point and Irene had to drag the unconscious child through the low-hanging bushes. By that time attracted by the cries in the neighborhood, Mrs. Slaunwhite's brother, Sgt. Paul of the 10th Cavalry, who had just arrived home, dashed to assist. The three French plunged in fully clothed, crossed the river and rendered first aid to the accident victim, who by that time was blue. Rushing blankets to the shore, Mrs. Slaunwhite was ready to wrap the child when she was brought across the bridge further down the Run and she was taken home.

DOCTOR CALLED

A DOCTOR was called and succeeded in bringing the little girl safely back to consciousness. A large quantity of water was expelled from her lungs. As nearly as can be ascertained Mimi had been playing on a rock just off shore when she slipped and must have gasped for air when she reached the water, which strangled her. At no sound was heard from her. Between the time she fell in and the time she was rescued by her gallant little friend she had drifted fully 20 yards downstream.

The courage and presence of mind of the 10-year-old girl has excited the admiration of those who learned of the rescue and the deep gratitude