

Edward Stark

1901 Census, St. Cross Cottage, Dodnor, Carisbrooke

<i>Edward Stark</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>Dairyman</i>	<i>Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight</i>
Sarah Ann Stark	Wife	58	Home duties	Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight
Kate Minnie Stark	Daughter	21	Home duties	Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight
Minnie Kate Stark	Daughter	21	Home duties	Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight
Rose Rolf	Grandchild	1		Newport, Isle of Wight

Isle of Wight County Press – 30 June 1906

DODNOR DAIRYMAN'S DEATH.

FOUND IN WATER-TANK.

On Wednesday evening the Deputy-Coroner for the Island (F. A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquest at the Castle and Banner, Hunnyhill, concerning the death of Mr. Edward Stark, aged 66, a dairyman of St. Cross Cottage Dairy, Dodnor, who, shortly after 8 o'clock the previous evening, was found dead in a rain-water tank at the side of the house. At the outset, the Coroner apologised for the unusual hour of the inquest (6.30), saying he had fixed it at that time to prevent the inconvenience which might be felt if it had been held on the following day (Coronation-day). Mr. Walter Barton was chosen foreman of the jury.

Elizabeth Farley, wife of John Henry Farley, of 105 Hunnyhill, an engine driver at the Cement-mills, gave evidence of identification of the body. On the previous evening she was at the dairy – she went there shortly after 6 – and saw deceased, who was her father, sitting in his arm chair. She talked to him and he seemed as well as he had been for some time. He had been in ill-health for a long time and had been unable to do any work for about a year, being attended by Dr. Thompson. During the last three weeks he had been worse. He asked witness's mother for refreshment and she gave him bread and milk. He ate it and returned to his chair and witness continued talking to him. She afterwards bade her father good-night, saying "I hope you will have a better night." He replied "I hope so." Witness walked out to the gate with her mother. Her sisters were outside. Witness said to them "Go in with father. Don't leave him alone." Witness's sister Marian said she would go in and went. When she got in deceased was not in the room. After an interval of about five minutes witness's sister called out and they ran back to the house. Witness thought her father was choking. When she went there she saw her father lying dead in the pathway, apparently having been pulled out of the rain-water tank.

In reply to the Foreman, witness said it was a little old-fashioned rain-water tank below the ground level and the depth was not more than 5 ft. The cover of the tank was generally open – more frequently open than closed.

Marian Stark, daughter of the deceased, living at home, said at the call of the last witness she went into the house to find deceased, but could not find him in the room where her mother and he had been left. She went to the stairs and said "Father, are you there?" but could get no answer. She then asked her sister Minnie, who was at the bottom of the garden, if she had seen deceased. She replied she had not. Witness then went round the side of the house, where the tank was, and found deceased. He was in the habit of going to the tank. All his body was in the tank; witness could only see his shoulders, the other part of his body being underneath the water. Witness picked up his stick that was outside, screaming for help, and caught deceased by the braces and held him up as high as she could till help came. Witness's sister Minnie came and they, together with a young man named George Foss, who also came, helped to

get deceased out of the tank. Dr. Thompson was sent for by a cyclist messenger, and he came immediately. Deceased had not been out of the house five minutes. The cover of the tank was more often left off than on, the water being used for the pigs. – Q. Has anybody ever had an accident there before ? – No, never. Deceased had often fallen down, and some six years ago he fell from a loft. He had been in occupation of the dairy for about 43 years. He had been in very bad health for some time, being only able to walk short distances – just in and out the house. About three weeks ago he fell down in the stable.

The Coroner said the witness's evidence seemed very satisfactory and straightforward. He did not think it necessary to call any of the other witnesses who were present at the time.

Dr. Charles J. Thompson, of Newport, said he was called to see the deceased on the previous evening at the dairy and arrived there within about ten minutes, before half-past 8. He saw the deceased lying in the scullery. He was quite dead and death had occurred quite recently. He did not regard death as due to drowning, but to syncope. Deceased had two bruises on the right side of the head and one slight abrasion, which might have been caused by getting deceased out of the well. Deceased had been in a bad state of health. Witness had been attending him continuously for some months for heart disease. He had double valvular disease and was only just able to get about. Witness had seen him the same morning. He did not get up at all a good many days. He thought in all probability deceased had an attack of syncope and fell into the tank and that it was more than likely he was dead before he got into the tank. As he saw the tank he did not think deceased could have lifted the heavy lid.

The Coroner, in summing up, said having regard to the doctor's evidence it was quite possible that the theory he had advanced that deceased had an attack of syncope and fell into the well was the correct one.

Dr. Thompson said only the same morning deceased asked him if he could do anything more for him, and he (witness) told deceased's wife he might die at any time.

The Coroner said although the body was found in the tank it did not justify the jury coming to the conclusion that he was drowned, and he did not think that any stigma of self-destruction could be entertained.

A verdict of "Death from failure of the heart's action" was returned.

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