

John F. Sears
1852(?) - June 2, 1901
SHORT IN HIS ACCOUNTS,

It is Believed that John F. Sears Committed Suicide.

MYSTERY IN HIS DEATH

On Day He Died He was to Have Met the Directors of the Bank,

Monticello, Wis., June 10.—It has just come to light that John F. Sears, formerly cashier of the Bank of Monticello, who was found dead June 2 at the foot of a windmill, on a farm belonging to him, north of this place, was in an unfortunate financial condition. On the day of his death he was to have met the directors of the bank and to explain to them some discrepancies in his books. The directors were already in session when the news came that the former cashier was dead, having apparently fallen from the platform of the windmill, sixty-five feet from the ground. Whether the fall was an accident or whether Mr. Sears jumped to his death probably will never be known.

Mr. Sears was an active member of the Baptist church, and was treasurer of the annual state convention of that denomination. No one knows anything about his financial condition, for his books are in confusion. Those familiar with his affairs, however, place his liabilities at about \$40,000 and his assets at about \$25,000. The liabilities include an alleged shortage at the bank, which is believed to be under \$12,000, The bank is protected by a bond of \$10,000, furnished by a Baltimore Surety company. The only sufferers of consequence will be individual creditors.

Mr. Sears was cashier of the bank up to April 18, when the directors elected Leon Breylinger, a young business man of the village, to succeed him. Some of the books kept by Mr. Sears have disappeared, among them the journal of a creamery company, of which he was president and which is unable to find about \$2000 of its funds.

Twelve thousand dollars life insurance, payable to his wife, was carried by Mr. Sears. He was 42 years old, and is survived by his wife and a daughter, Edith, 12 years of age.

“Mr. Sears’ troubles were not due to speculation or anything of that kind,” said Cashier Breylinger, “but principally to the fact that he was not a good business man. He was not wise in his investments, and kept getting in deeper and deeper. Every move he made to extricate himself only drew him down the more. There is some confusion which will soon be straightened out. Our books and those of our Chicago correspondent do not agree, and it will take time to trace the thing out. The bank, however, will not lose anything. It is impossible to say how much of the bank funds are missing; but we know of one certificate of deposit which was credited on the books as paid, while the certificate was still outstanding. The money is missing. The investigation may show others.”

NOTE: Probably was interred in the old Monticello (Zwingli) cemetery. Many of the grave markers from that era have been broken and thrown to the back of the fence.