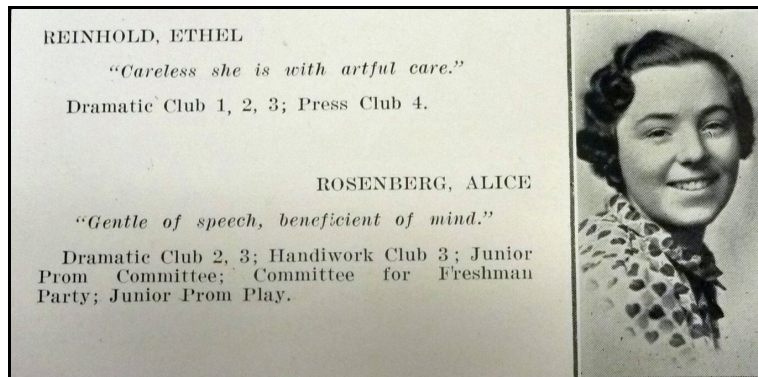


## The Romeo & Juliet of Snipsit Lake

Alice Rosenberg, 19 and Henry Aborn, 22, were in love.

Alice, 19, graduated from Rockville High School in 1937 and was working in Hartford for Aetna Insurance. Her father Alfred Rosenberg, prior to his death in 1937, owned a hardware store in Rockville. They lived at 2 Lawrence Street.



*Alice's High School picture.*

Henry, 22, from a farming family on Brown's Bridge Road in Tolland, dropped out of school to help support his family. He was working as a gardener for the wealthy William Maxwell family in Rockville.



Their families worshiped at the First Lutheran Church in Rockville on West Main Street, where they likely met. The young couple had been dating for about 18 months and were both quite religious and involved in church youth activities. Both families supported the relationship.

Friends said they were both popular, serious-minded and of a religious nature.

The Rosenberg family had a cottage on the north shore of Snipsic Lake not far from the Aborn farm. Friends and family felt that they had a wonderful future ahead of them.

On the evening of Monday, June 6, 1938 at the Rosenberg cottage the two young lovers held hands, waded into the lake, embraced each other and slid beneath the cold waters.

When they did not reappear in their homes Tuesday, family and friends grew concerned. They were last seen by neighbors at the cottage in Tolland about 8 in the evening Monday night. The families communicated and initially thought the couple might have eloped. A search was started to be sure.

William Aborn, one of Henry's four brothers, went to the cottage on Snipsit Lake to see if they could be found there. Upon entering he found a partly filled bottle of ether with two glasses and a half-empty bottle of root beer nearby.

Going to the lakeshore he found Alice's body about 15 feet from shore. His brother's body was 45 feet from shore. Was it an accident or suicide?

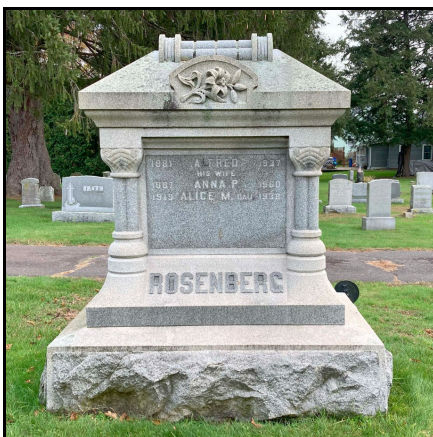
## 2 ROCKVILLE YOUTHS FOUND DROWNED AT SNIPSIK LAKE

The couple had been inseparable since meeting a year and a half earlier. That Sunday they took communion together at the First Lutheran Church. Sunday night at 8 p.m. Alice wrote a letter to her best friend in Providence College. It was postmarked in Hartford Monday.

When her friend received the letter it read in part, "When you receive this letter, it will be the last one you will ever receive from me and believe me, Henry and I will be in a very happy state. We are going to our heavenly home." The letter closed: "I leave you loads of love. Don't grieve for us for we are very happy."

The police concluded, from the following notes left by the couple, that they had culminated a suicide pact. Henry had written on a torn piece of paper, "To whom it may concern: I am gone." A note was found in Alice's room leaving her things to her sisters and the sentence, "I cannot live without Henry."

The medical examiner, John Flaherty of Rockville, concluded that they had apparently attempted suicide first by drinking Ether mixed with root beer, but that it only made them ill.



Alice left behind her mother Anna, twin sister Ruth, older brother Alfred and a younger sister Dorothy. Funeral services were arranged so that each family could attend both. Alice was buried in Grove Hill Cemetery in Vernon with her family and Henry in Tolland's North Cemetery with his family. Police furnished a motorcycle escort for both funerals.

Why did they choose to take their lives? Speculation was that maybe Alice was pregnant, but the Police found no indication of that to be true.

It appears from Alice's letter that the suicide pact was Henry's idea. Alice was so young and so very much in love she couldn't bear to be without him.

Hartford and Rockville newspapers did not print a reason for why Henry wanted to take his life. They stated that no reason for the suicides could be learned and wrote, "Motive still unknown."

### **The Truth Comes Out**

The *Bridgeport Sunday Herald* reported the whole story that local newspapers wouldn't print:

A few days before their death Henry went to a physician for a physical examination. He hadn't been in the best of health for a long time and the doctor told him that it would never be wise for him to marry.

The blow stunned them and they decided that life without each other would be futile and useless.

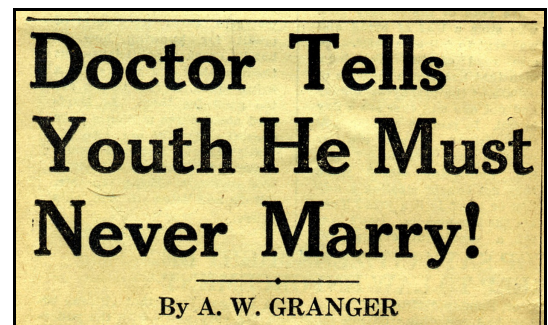
Their strong faith convinced them that suicide was their only way to remain together. The act itself did not seem rushed, but reasonably planned with church and letters.

Perhaps local authorities and the Rockville newspapers hid the truth to protect the doctor.

We can only speculate.

### **Sources**

This article was sourced from articles in *The Rockville Leader*, *The Hartford Courant*, and the *Bridgeport Sunday Herald*.



*Bridgeport Sunday Herald* headline.