

REPRINT

COATESVILLE HERALD

Harmon H. Hathaway, Publisher

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14 KILLED BY TORNADO AT COATESVILLE

The worst catastrophe in the history of Coatesville and perhaps Indiana, struck this vicinity Friday evening when a gigantic tornado swept through three counties and literally leveled Coatesville to the ground, killing 14 persons and injuring hundreds of others, some seriously. The tremendous funnel-shaped twister hit the town about 8:23 and it is believed that it lasted about one minute and 50 seconds. The tornado shaped up in Clay County, cut across Putnam county in a northeasterly direction, and swept into Coatesville from the southwest. It hit the Charles Cline farm, crumbled most of Water street, demolished the Coatesville Elevator and Feed Company, swept on through the business district, utterly destroying every thing in its path, swinging out of town through the library, the Methodist Church, the Earl Wallace farm and onward northeast. The terrific impact struck Hadley, laying it flat and swept onward into Danville, continuing to demolish through the west part of Danville and finally blowing it all out near Brownsburg. The swath was estimated to be about one-eighth of a mile wide.

The terrific destruction can not be described. The utter chaos which enveloped the town can not be imagined. There are no words in the English vocabulary to completely describe the condition. The giant twister came in with a whirl which seemed to suck everything in its path, and then completely twist it to shreds. As the wind sucked, the air from buildings, the houses literally exploded with the occupants in them.

Local residents did not realize what was coming. The terrific roar of the tornado sounded like a Deisel engine coming on the Pennsylvania railroad, which was accompanied by a tremendous

noise. Those who saw it coming report it looked like smoke boiling out of the ground, rolling funnel-shaped. Some watched it as it progressed and wondered what it was. Those who did realize what it was did not have time to reach safety. Many started praying for deliverance. Others did not have time to even think what to do. As the giant demon roared out of town, Coatesville was reduced to a rubble. The giant trees which had beautified the town had been picked by the tornado, roots and all. A few stumps remained standing. Timbers from the buildings were nothing but kindling. One had to search for a board that was whole. Clothing, household goods, antiques, treasures of a lifetime, and valuable inheritance from founders of Coatesville were torn to shreds. Baking stoves, refrigerators, stoves, children's toys, cars, trucks, tractors, caskets, groceries, furniture, and everything you could imagine were tumbled in one huge mass. The streets were covered with the debris and completely blocked. A tremendous rain storm followed the tornado which flooded the streets to a depth of a foot of water and completely drenched the demolished town.

As the tornado roared out of town an unearthly calm prevailed. Every activity in town had stopped. An unnatural hush seemed to envelope everything. Then the silence was broken by the piercing screams of people in the demolished buildings. Screams of pain and of suffering, anguish over the dead and the cry for help, and hysterical screams of fear. Others remained stunned, wondering what it was all about. The heartbreaking tragedy can not be described. In the dusk of the night, one could barely distinguish the ruins. Darkness soon fell over the terrifying scene. Residents rushed out to their loved ones and those who were not hit started rescue work. As the news was broadcast over the radio stations, relatives and friends of Coatesville residents rushed to the scene from nearby towns and communities to see how they were and where they were. The immense throngs of people, waded water, knee-deep, tangled in wires searching the remains. Quietness prevailed as throngs realized they were walking among the dead. If the transformer which supplied the town with electric current had not been blown out, hundreds would have been electrocuted.

Perhaps the first person to reach the scene was Rev. Leslie Long, pastor of the local Missionary Baptist Church. As Rev. Long rushed uptown, he met Harold Powell, local funeral director who

called to him, "Reverend, is your car in running order." He replied, "Yes, the motor is running." Mr. Powell then called, "Go for help, get all the help you can." Rev. Long jumped into the car and drove hurriedly to Stillsville, where he phoned the Red Cross and the State Police for help. State Police rushed to the scene and within an hour after the tragedy, Red Cross ambulances were on the scene from Indianapolis. Other ambulances from nearby towns began arriving immediately. Sirens began screaming. Traffic became so intense that police had to take it under control. Cars were lined up for miles out of town trying to get into town.

State Police set up headquarters in the Arthur Biehl home on South Milton Street. The Rev. Carlyle Mason, pastor of the local Methodist Church, and Bernard Casady broke into the school building, which remained in good condition except for a few broken window lights, and started a fire. Ollie McCloud, janitor, soon arrived and took over the building. The Red Cross rushed their mobile units to the scene, which included a generator which supplied lights for the emergency. The Red Cross set up their headquarters in the school building. They supplied hot food for workers and local citizens.

Leonard Walton called the Navy authorities and they sent help. Mr. Bamberger, superintendent of the Public Service Company at Greencastle, heard of the disaster and rushed electrical workers to the scene to help restore electric current to the town, which they were able to get started about 3:00 o'clock Sunday morning.

Dr. John Ellett, local physician, was in his office and saw the storm. Immediately he grabbed his bag, answered the call for help and began work immediately in the streets. Other doctors and physicians from nearby towns rushed to the scene as the call for doctors went out. Bulldozers cleared the streets to make way for ambulances. No one in town rested during the night.

The dawn of another day revealed the terrible condition of the town. A cold wind accompanied the rain and snow which fell throughout the day added to the desolation. Scores of people came to the town through fields. Faces revealed the desolate condition. News reporters from Indianapolis rushed to the scene with cameras and sent the information to the outside world. The one link at the telephone exchange remained intact. Mr. and Mrs. Cleo Miller labored constantly at the board sending out messages, calling aid. The current was off and calls had to be hand rung. Mrs. Miller stayed at the board until noon Saturday. Part of the house where the switchboard is located was swept away. Telegrams began arriving. It was reported 16 telegrams arrived Saturday. Others sent telegrams.

The Greencastle Boy Scouts volunteered and delivered telegrams and distributed Yum Yum bread to local citizens which a gift of the West Baking company. WIBC Broadcasting Co. arrived on the scene and reported news of the disaster and contacted Coatesville residents from the world. Because sightseers were hindering rescue work, State Police enforced a rigid blockade of the town. No looting was reported. The National Guard broadcasted through loud speakers that all people except Coatesville residents had to be off the streets by 6:00 o'clock and informed local citizens to go to the school house for food, clothing and medical aid and supplies.

Sunday—Easter Sunday—dawned clear and bright. But not even a church bell could ring. Every church building in Coatesville, except the Primitive Baptist, was in a crumbled mass. The Methodist Church had recently installed a \$2,000 electric organ. The altar and pulpit stands were practically new. All were a jumbled mass as was the Christian Church. The Baptist Church was in collapse but most of the pews and the floor joists were not destroyed. The flooring still remains good. The Red Cross gave large chocolate bars to the children. The children in Coatesville, which were sent by the Danville and Greencastle merchants.

BUSINESS DISTRICT
The Coatesville Elevator and Feed Co. is in ruins. The entire buildings and storage silos were a huddled mass with a box car

A VIEW OF COATESVILLE AFTER FRIDAY'S STORM



This is a view of Coatesville, showing the results of the tornado. The picture was taken at the north edge of the tornado path near the Methodist parsonage, looking south toward the business section of town. The building at the extreme left is the W. R. Lisby apartment.

APPRECIATION

A stricken people acknowledge with deepest gratitude your sympathy and assistance in their great hour of need. We are truly grateful to all the outside agencies and to everyone who have so generously given of their time, labor and sympathy in this time of its greatest disaster and sorrow. The cooperation has been wonderful.

Everyone is also grateful for the hundreds of letters of sympathy received from relatives, friends and business associates. They have meant so much to those who have suffered the loss of loved ones, business establishments and homes. May God bless you all.
C. D. Knight, Chairman Relief Committee.

It was. Then they recognized the funnel and Mr. Hathaway yelled to the boys to throw themselves to the ground, which they did. The storm wallowed them around in the mud and they were struck by falling debris. When they were able to look up, The Herald building was gone. Rex suffered cuts and a bruised elbow and was treated at the hospital. Mr. Hathaway suffered a back injury and a sprained ankle. X-rays revealed no broken bones. Duward was not injured.

Several people were in the Mark Hadley restaurant which was only damaged in the rear of the building. The front remained standing. The Farm Supply Store room was damaged considerably but some of the walls were standing. The Coatesville Implement Company was a complete ruin. Carl Arbuckle, Max Casady and Bernard Casady were the only ones in the store. They crawled under a new Frizer car and escaped injury. The car was only slightly damaged. Mrs. Marilyn Arbuckle and her mother, Mrs. Ernest Miller, were at the drug store and were uninjured. Ernest Miller was over at the garage which is being remodelled. Glen Curtis and Robert Sullivan were putting a new ceiling on the garage and other men were also working. Eddie Walters, small son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Walters, Jr., ran into the garage and said "something terrible is happening out there. Mr. Miller picked him up, put him in the cellar of the garage and all the men got in after him that could get out of the others got under a truck. None was injured.

The Coatesville Welding and Repair shop was entirely swept away. Mr. Dewese had just left for his home at Fillmore. The Roscoe Knight drug store was damaged but not badly. Mr. and Mrs. Kivett and Larry were in

hospital. Two other grandchildren of Mrs. Mary Lou White were with them at the time. Russell White, age 3 years, was killed instantly. The other girl, Rose Elaine, was severely injured and was taken to the Putnam County hospital. An arm had to be amputated. Her condition is slightly improved.

The Campbell & Powell Funeral Home and the entire Powell building were badly damaged. The vault and the center of the bank remained intact. Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Burch and baby, who occupied one of the apartments were at the restaurant at the time and escaped uninjured. Mr. Powell was in the furniture store. He called his wife and her mother, Mrs. John Hulse, to come down stairs from the apartments. But they only got as far as the hall and lay huddled together until the fury subsided. They only had cuts and bruises. Mr. Powell escaped injury.

The Coatesville Recreation room is gone. Jack Gambo's store was a jumbled mass. Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Gambo were in the store, and Hugh Isenberg and David and Max Dillon were customers. They ran to the rear of the store where they huddled behind the ice box. It blew over against them and protected them from injury. Mr. Dillon suffered a knee injury and had to be put in a cast. Mr. Gambo said he had just arrived from Indianapolis with a truck load of groceries and "the tornado unloaded them for him all right."

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THE DEAD

AT COATESVILLE

Richard Ellett
Wayne Beaman
Mrs. Julia Lawrence
Frank Ellett
Mrs. Lottie Ellett
Perry Knight
Frank Grimes
Wayne Pursell
Mrs. Wayne Pursell
Russell White
Harry Rumley
Janice Coffey
Victor Wise (died of heart attack upon learning of grandson's death).

Harry Britton, Crawfordville.

AT DANVILLE

Donald Howard
Mrs. Jesse Dooley

AT HADLEY

Grace Hadley
Harley Hartshaw.

Latest News On Injured Persons

The latest report from the injured persons who are in the various hospitals, is as follows: Robert Long Hospital—Mrs. Fern Cline—improving; Mrs. Fannie Mark—fair; Mrs. Flossie Marley—fair; Mrs. Charles West—bad arm injury—fair; Mrs. Maude Wood—good; Earl Wallace—much improved; Mrs. Orena Cummins and Lois Pennington, Danville—fair; Methodist Hospital—Mrs. Anna Stewart—critical—slightly improved; Rose Edwards—fair; Miss Daisy Boal, Danville—discharged; Kenneth Jenkins—put in cast, 14 month old baby—improving; daughter—good; Mrs. Jenkins—treated; Atlas Phillips—fair, abdominal injury; Howard Davis—bad leg injury, fair;

George Masten—entered and dismissed Saturday; Elvin Stewart—pneumonia, improving; Helen Lininger—fair; Greenacastle Hospital—Ruth Marley—fair; Herschel Greenlee—improving; Russell Siddons—much the same; Frankie Ellett—improving; Shirley Masten—discharged on Tuesday; Mrs. Dorcas Cline—critical; Rose White—slight improvement;

Annette Lawrence—improving; Lawrence Atwood—dismissed; Riley Sacre—transferred to the Robert Long Hospital; St. Vincent's Hospital—James Walters—much the same; Ward Rollings—dismissed, artery in leg cut; Greencastle Hospital—Mrs. Gale Robinson—fair, shock, arm broken; Mrs. Austin—dismissed Saturday; Mrs. Cox—dismissed Saturday; Bert Wallace—treated and dismissed Sunday; Max Dillon—put in cast and returned home.

the store and were not injured. The Town Hall was not injured too badly nor was the Lumber Co. The Lumber Company shed was swept away, but the new lumber stock remained.

The Coatesville Monument Co. building was damaged some, but no one was at the shop at the time. The Elliott grocery was completely demolished. Mrs. Hazel Elliott and her daughter, Alberta, and Harry Britton of Crawfordville, meat salesman for the Harris Packing Co., were in the store at the time. Mr. Britton was killed instantly. Mrs. Elliott and Alberta suffered severe bruises and lacerations.

TOWNSPEOPLE

The storm did the greatest damage on North Milton street. Three people were killed and others severely injured. The old Fusan house collapsed and burned. It was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Coffey and their two children, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Wood, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Cunningham. Mr. Wood was thrown into the street from the second floor. Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Cunningham were in bed with the flu and they were thrown out into the debris. They crawled out but they don't know how. Miss Janice Coffey and her

(Continued on back Page)



Looking across Main Street at the Old Bank Building



Looking east from the Coatesville Elevator.
The depot is on the upper right.



Looking northeast from Coatesville Elevator at North Milton
towards present location of Methodist Church.



Looking west on Main Street from the Old Bank Building and
present location of The Coatesville Flower and Gift Shop.



Coatesville Elevator and buildings to the East of it on Main Street.



Coatesville Elevator and buildings to the West of it on Main Street.



Location of the Dry Goods Store and the Lodge Hall which was upstairs.
Present location of The Coatesville Advertiser
and Dr. Heaven and Dr. Vieira.



Knight's Drug Store on left and Dry Goods Store and Lodge Hall on right.
Looking South on Milton St. from Corner of Milton and Main.



Present location of Dr. Michael Lydick and Schilling's Variety.



Looking southwest from North Milton St.
The old bank building is in the upper left.



Danville: Looking east from the west edge of town on S.R. 36.
Present location of the Catholic Church



Danville: On S.R. 36 looking northwest on West side of Danville.

PAGE TWO

COATESVILLE HERALD

Entered at the postoffice at Coatesville, Ind., as second class mail matter.

HARMON H. HATHAWAY
Editor and Publisher

Subscription Price \$1.50 Per Year

Obituaries, to subscribers, free, to non-subscribers, \$1.50. Cards of thanks, In Memoriams, one cent per word.

Member
HOOSIER STATE PRESS
ASSOCIATION

Herald Published
Again This Week

On Wednesday night of last week when The Herald was completed, the editor never dreamed it was the last local issue, nor of the terrible calamity that was soon to befall our quiet little town.

Upon first thought, after coming through the storm with a slightly bruised back, the editor felt that his newspaper days were ended and the best thing to do was to go out and get a job.

But it is hard to let down a community in which you have become a part in as vital as The Herald has played.

And so, through the generous help of our neighbor newspaper, The Hendricks County Republican, The Herald is being printed and sent this week to its almost one thousand subscribers, some of which are scattered all over the United States, and who would like to hear direct from the old home town.

The Herald's mailing list was found to be intact—except for a few names at the Stilesville post office. If subscribers there will let us know if they fail to receive this issue, it will aid us in placing the name on the mailing list again.

In clearing out the bricks and rubble this week, almost the complete list of circulation cards were found. However, we do not have the cards for the subscribers whose Herald of March 19 and 21 carried the words "Subscription Expired" stamped in red. Please let us know if you were one of these.

FOURTEEN KILLED

(Continued from Front Page)
My friend, Harry Rumley, of Amo owned in the house and were held beneath the rubble and buried in the ruins while rescuers tried to answer their cries for help. They were able to pull Mrs. Claude Wood out of the debris. She was taken to the Greencastle hospital.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hodson was completely destroyed. The Carnegie library is a complete wreck.

The home of Mrs. Rose Edwards, Meridian, was completely demolished. Mrs. Edwards was in her home when struck. She was recovering from a severe illness.

A large tree crashed through the house, completely covering her. When rescuers reached her, the branches of the tree had protected her from the huge walls of the house which had fallen on top of the tree. Rescuers carried her to the home of Harry Walton. The house had punctured two holes in her feet and she suffered other injuries. She was later taken to the Methodist hospital in the ambulance, the last person to be moved.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Willen and son were at home. When they saw the danger they started to get to the basement. Mr. Willen and son got to the steps. Mrs. Willen attempted to close a door and a part of the house struck her, throwing her down the cellar steps. After the storm they crawled out. The son had been sick in bed and was clad in his pajamas. They crawled out and Mr. Willen assisted the others. They were all taken to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Leland Davison.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walton had been out of town and were returning home and had gotten as far as the Roy Masten farm when the storm struck. They were not hurt but their house had 11 windows broken and the interior damaged. Many persons were carried there to the one room which was intact until medical help arrived.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Herschel Greenlee was completely demolished. Mrs. Greenlee and Joseph crawled beside the piano for protection and were not injured.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Lawrence was at work at the Reno pumping station. Mrs. Lawrence was killed in the wreckage. Rescuers came for the little girl, Julia Clare, who stood screaming, "I want my mother, I want my mother. She's dead, I know she's dead. I saw her." She was not hurt except bruises. She was carried to the home of Harry Walton. Leland Davison found Annette Lawrence in the middle of a street in a foot of water. Her arm was broken and she suffered bruises and shock. Mr. Davison carried her to his home and cared for her until medical aid arrived.

An unusual experience was reported by Rev. Long. He and Mrs. Long had come out to the Baptist Church from their home in Indianapolis to practice the junior choir for the Easter music. When the current went off in town, they had just finished their practicing and had started for home. They told the children in town to run home so that they might get there before the rain. The rest of the children got into Mr. Long's car and the car of

Julia Clare described it, "Everything was black, and then we were outdoors."

The Arthur Tincher home was destroyed. Mrs. Roy Masten and Shirley Masten were visiting Mrs. Opal Tincher. They were thrown out into Rev. Mason's garden. Mrs. Masten suffered a deep gash in the leg. Shirley Masten suffered a brain concussion and entered the hospital for treatment and has been dismissed. Mrs. Tincher went to shut the door when the house crumpled.

Rev. Carlyle Mason, Methodist pastor, and his family were in the parsonage. They were amusing the children while the current was off by telling them stories. Rev. Mason, who is usually in school in Chicago, was at home for the Good Friday services. They saw the storm coming and thought the funeral was going to miss the town. When it headed this way, they grabbed the children and started for the basement but before they got there glass was falling all around them. When they came out, Mrs. Mason said they came out the back and Mr. Mason said they came out the front door. Anyway they got out.

Mrs. Walton took Mrs. Harold Willen and son and Mrs. Mason and the children to Mrs. Willa Whitenack's at North Salem where they were cared for and their wounds were dressed. Mrs. Willen suffered an injured arm and a badly cut neck and shoulders. Rev. Mason went on to the school house to build a fire. He went down to the fire station to contact others to help in whatever way they could. Rev. Mason said their furniture was almost Monday when a death prevented. He assisted continuously. While in the hospital visiting the patients three girls called to him and said they wanted to accept Christ on Sunday night.

Bernard Edwards and his family were at Dr. Ellett's office. They watched the storm and hurried home to find everything gone.

He went continuously until 11 o'clock Saturday night. Every victim of the tragedy in hospitals have been visited daily except Monday when a death prevented. He assisted continuously. While in the hospital visiting the patients three girls called to him and said they wanted to accept Christ on Sunday night.

The Frank Brown house was damaged and the house owned by A. P. Robinson, formerly the Pete Williams home, was badly damaged.

And so the list grew. The homes of Mrs. Frances Mark, Mr. and Mrs. Phil Christy, were at home alone in the old Christie property next to the mill. Mrs. Reeves pulled a large shell over her and the child and they were protected from the debris and escaped later. Mr. and Mrs. Eliza Marley were seriously injured. Mr. Marley said they heard the roar and thought it was a train. When they realized it was wind, they attempted to shut the door. They saw the roof of Jake Christie's house coming toward them and the next thing he remembered they were getting up out of the debris of Jake Christie's house. Mr. Marley suffered a broken arm

and Mrs. Marley still is in the hospital suffering from cuts and bruises. Miss Marley was bruised badly.

Mrs. Anna Stewart was seriously injured. She was at home alone. Herman was at the restaurant. He rushed home and found her across the road. She suffered several broken bones and remains in a serious condition. Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Jenkins and family were injured when their house collapsed. They were taken with Mrs. Stewart to the Methodist hospital. The baby's condition was serious but is improved. Mr. Jenkins suffered a back injury and the daughter is in good condition.

Elvin Stewart was ill from pneumonia. He was removed immediately from the collapsed house to the hospital. Mrs. Helen Lineinger, a daughter, who was caring for her father, also suffered injuries.

One of the most seriously injured was Mrs. Dorcas Cline. Mrs. Cline and her daughter, Mrs. Ida Wilson, were in Mrs. Wilson's home. Mrs. Wilson saw the storm and turned to speak to her mother who was standing a few feet from her. Before she could speak part of the ceiling fell in and her mother was hit on the head by a large slab of concrete. She suffered a severe head injury and shoulder injury, broken leg above the knee, and right arm badly bruised.

The Charles West property was destroyed. Mr. West suffered a badly damaged arm. He was taken to the home of Harry Walton until medical aid arrived. Mrs. Mary Robinson, sister of Mr. West, who lived with him, did not suffer serious injury. She was taken to the Davison home and later went to the home of her son, Fay Robinson, near Fillmore.

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This is a reproduction of the first issue of THE HERALD printed after the tornado. The front page is shown as it was. The back side is just the news story reproduced.

35 YEARS AGO

March 26, 1948, a tornado came through Coatesville and the surrounding area.

All pictures are courtesy of Vivian Hadley and the late Mark Hadley.

Here is a view of some of the damage that resulted.

Not a good place to sleep!
One of the many strange sights after a tornado.



Searching through the rubble.

