

Partly cloudy and cool.  
Friday: high today in 60s.  
Saturday: Sunrise 5:54, sun-  
set 7:14.  
Sunday: 11  
Monday: 14  
Tuesday: 14  
Wednesday: 11

# The Des Moines Register

Des Moines, Iowa, Thursday Morning, May 16, 1968—26 Pages—Two Sections  
The Newspaper Iowa Depends Upon

# DOUBLE TORNADO DISASTER; OEL WEIN, CHARLES CITY HIT



# Paperboy loses entire route via tornado

"How many customers do you have on your route?" "None."

Brad Howell, 15, spoke softly as he described the current situation on his Charles City paper route in Cedar Terrace, low rent housing project for elderly. He had had Route 28 with 42 customers. At 4:51 p.m. Wednesday, May 15, Brad and all the other Charles City Press paperboys were out on their routes . . . doing their daily duty of delivering the paper. All had been dismissed from school at the regular time and had come to the Press building or drop-off points to gather their bundles and go on their way.

None, if any, had radios to warn them of the impending disaster. They were concerned only with getting their work completed. At a tender age, Brad grew up to adult responsibilities in a hurry. So did his brother, Ricky, 13, who has a route in the hospital area. No doubt Brad will be recommended for a hero's badge, although at the time he wasn't considering this as a reward.

## AT CEDAR TERRACE

This is Brad's story: "I stopped my bike at Apartment 49 in Cedar Terrace near the river and by the bridge. It was hailing real hard and told the woman there (Mrs. Hazel Burgess) to go into the house and just as we went in, I looked out the window and saw the tornado starting to form. I looked right at it over Trowbridges. I took a table and knocked all the things off of it and put it in the middle of the floor. I told her to get under it and she did and then I got under it.

"Then the windows where we looked out flew in, curtains were flying, boards were coming in through both windows and it was all over in a couple of seconds. I tried to

keep calm because she was shaking so much and I said, "Hang on . . . don't be afraid."

## IN RUBBISH

"We were lying in a pile of rubbish. The walls were still up but the roof was gone. The table didn't come down, but there was part of the roof and boards laying over the table. I crawled out from under the table and cleared rubbish away and she came out.

"In the next apartment the walls came down and the woman was cut badly. I crawled out of Hazel's apartment, I went through the window because the brick wall and other things blocked the doorway. She couldn't get out the window, because she is elderly. I went to the next apartment, No. 50, where Mrs. Evelyn Maas was hurt. She was standing in the bathroom when it hit, but I found her in the living room. Her right arm was cut from flying glass and her little finger was just hanging. Her arm was cut from her finger up to her elbow.

"Hazel, who is a nurse, I could tell she was a nurse because she had on her uniform, looked around her apartment and got a bathtowel and gave it to me. She told me to wrap it tightly around this woman's arm above the elbow. Then I looked around and saw there were a lot of people hurt. Then people started to run towards the houses. Then a man came over. Then I started worrying about my Mom. The only time I was afraid was after the storm and I started thinking about my Mom. I tried to get my bike out, but the brick wall had fallen on it, so I ran all the way home." (Brad's home is about 10 blocks from Cedar Terrace.)

## HIS BROTHER

In the meantime, Brad's brother, Ricky, 13, was on his route at the hospital. This is Ricky's story:

"I was coming down from the Chautauqua Home on my bike and it was raining pretty hard. The chain broke and I coasted as far as I could, then ran and got under the hospital canopy. Then it hailed. One of the people in the hospital yelled, "Get that paperboy."

"A woman patient in pajamas was there and we went to the emergency entrance . . . then there were quite a few people and we watched it to the west. The tornado was bouncing up and down. We could see trees flying by. The



**BRAVERY AT** a tender age was displayed by Charles City Press newsboys, Brad Howell (left) 15, and his brother, Ricky, 13, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Howell, 100 Charles St.

tornado came to the hospital and cut to the left (south) and went right by the hospital and came down in a field by the Chautauqua home. There was a real sharp whistling sound, like a flute hitting a high note and then it sounded like a big train. The lights went out and we went to the lobby.

"I got down behind the couch and looked out the windows and I could see boards and debris flying. I saw a car fly through the air and hit a street light. After it was over, I helped clean up glass for a few minutes.

"People were starting to bring injured ones to the hospital and they came in anything that could run. Then my brother came. He had run home and borrowed a neighbor's bike and he helped me put on my chain. My bike wasn't touched and we went home.

"My sister, Jewell, 17, was in the basement and she was crying and she was really glad to see us and she hugged me. My mom had been at work at Allen Travel Agency and left early, she got in the car to come home. She got as far as Weinberger Drug when the tornado hit. She got down on the floorboards and the wind picked up the 1953 Buick and

set it right on the sidewalk. Then she ran home. My Dad got there about 20 minutes after the storm. He sells Moorman Feed and was at Plainfield. Well, it was pretty nice to be all together."

Several days after the tornado when everyone was trying to pick up the pieces, Brad Howell stopped in the office to see Mrs. Robert Nehls, circulation manager for the Press.

Brad asked, "If they rebuild Cedar Terrace, can I have my route back?"

## COMPLETES SPECIALIST COURSE

**FT. BENJAMIN HARRISON, Ind.** — Pvt. James A. Graham has completed the Pay Disbursing Specialist Course at the U. S. Army Finance School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.

Pvt. Graham, son of Mr. and Mrs. Claude W. Graham, 714 9th Ave., Charles City, entered the Army in November 1967, and completed basic training at Ft. Knox, Ky. He was honored as Distinguished Graduate from his leadership preparation course at the 1st Army NCO Academy at Ft. Knox.

A 1933 graduate of Charles City Community High School, he graduated in 1967 from Iowa State University at



*Aerial view of Oelwein residential area looking west*

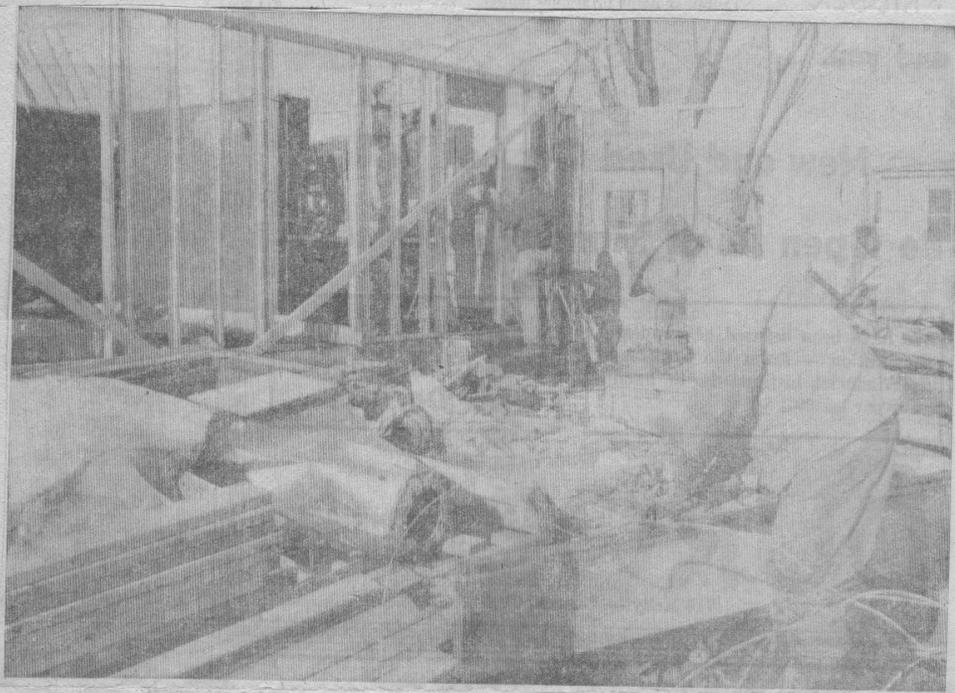
**MASSIVE TORNADO**

**CLEAN-UP**



**TELEPHONE OPERATORS** at Northwestern Bell Telephone Co. worked in makeshift shelter during emergency operations. At the time the tornado hit, the operators on duty, Coleen Gabel, Helen Gueffroy, student Sherol Wegner in training, Mrs. DeMaris Ostrander, Rosemary Byrne, Joan Busch, Mrs. Arlie Watson, Rhonda Havner, Rosalie DeVore and Louise Oeltjenbruns, ducked under the board

when the east wall and roof caved in, then crawled out and went back to duty. This temporary covering kept rain out during the soggy weekend. The telephone company has been assisted by about 250 additional workers. Four employes lost their homes, Jake Tjaden, Bob Kelly, Clair North and Jim Crandall.



**THIS WILL BE THE FIRST HOUSE** in Charles City to have a roof on it," said Mark Marquardt as he started to work on rebuilding his home at 800 6th Ave. The Marquardts also lost a new four-plex apartment house, both of

which were built during the past year. No time for complaining for Mark, he was out bright and early Sunday morning hammering and sawing.



**IMMEDIATELY AFTER** the twister hit, Lyle Hamman was attempting to get information out of Charles City via the Western Union facilities. He said messages were coming in, but he couldn't get messages out.

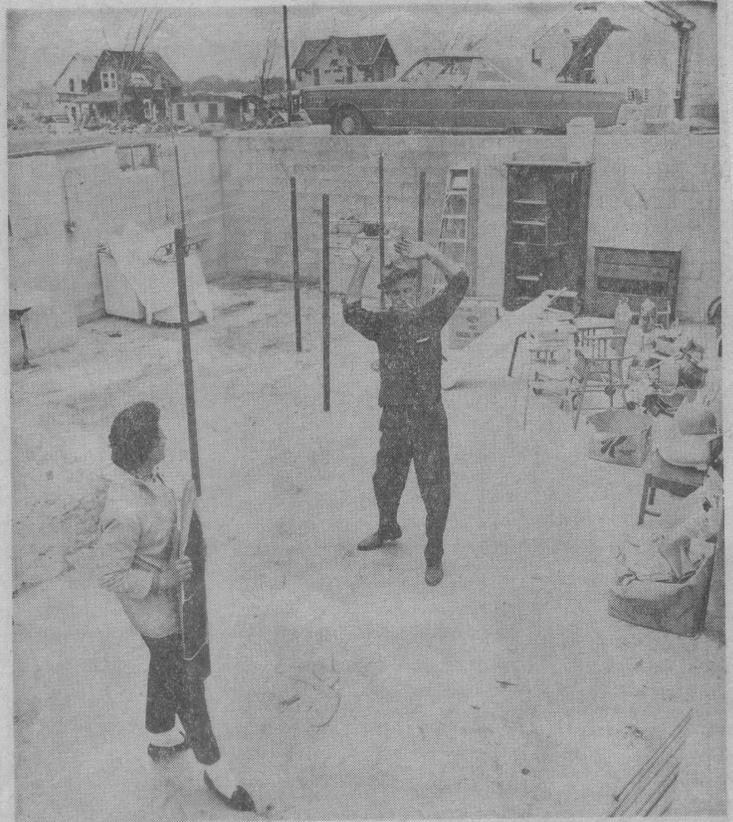


**DOLLARS FOR DISASTER** were collected by Charles City service clubs assisted by Osage and New Hampton Rotary Clubs and Shrine Club cycle patrols from Chickasaw County, Hampton and Waterloo. Bob Dee, New Hampton Rotarian; Andy Horvei, Charles City past Rotary president, and Dean Schlick, Charles City Shriner, were at work at 10 a.m. Sunday near Cashman's Flowers on Highway 18. Numerous cars stopped on the way out of town and persons gave more money after seeing the devastation, commenting, "What we gave before wasn't enough!"

# Raze Some Homes as Charles City Rebuilds



Charles City residents watch from the remains of a house while another dwelling heavily damaged by the May 15 tornado is burned. Sign placed by building inspectors on the remains, foreground, reads, "Leave Standing." A number of other dwellings too heavily damaged to salvage were destroyed.



REGISTER PHOTOS BY DAVE PENNEY

Glen Wilson tells how he and his wife huddled in the far corner of his basement while the tornado that struck Charles City May 15 "just lifted up" their \$19,000 home. The basement, car and a few possessions are all that remain. Despite the loss, the couple plans to rebuild.



Remains of Iowa State Employment office in rubble-strewn area on Clark St. in Charles City.



Some of worst damage is in northwest portion of Charles City. Entire blocks were wiped out in this area.



**ON CRUTCHES** from a previous accident, Tracy Sweet watches as the home of the Howard Barrett family, 902 Clark, goes up in flames. Sweet, former Oliver employe and professional photographer, lost his home and possessions, 804 N. Jackson, including all his camera equipment. He was going around on crutches with a battered camera

and remarked, "What a time to be without a camera." Home owners may request remains of their home be burned and they should check with the ward offices for information, Ward 1, Earl Price garage, 405 N. Jackson; Ward 2, trailer at Clark and Harwood; Ward 3, Sperry Transport, 407 F St.; Ward 4, County shed.



**POKING THROUGH THE REMAINS** of the city clerk's office are Mrs. Helen Webster, city clerk, and Mrs. Burt Burton, an office employee.



**A CHILD'S TOY** saved from the ruins sits on a lot at the corner of Grand and N. 16th St. Miraculously Charles City

did not lose any children.



The National Guard Wednesday night moved into Charles City, where more than 100 business places were destroyed or damaged



One official said 50 per cent of Charles City "got it . . . this is five times worse than at Bel-

mond two years ago." The grim task of digging through the wreckage began Thursday.

## Chimney Falls On Victim

By Jack Hovelson  
(Register Staff Writer)

OELWEIN, IA. — One death was reported from the tornado that struck Oelwein and hundreds of persons were injured. Some were reported in critical condition.

The person killed was identified as Mrs. Donald Damon, who was dead on arrival at Mercy Hospital here.

### Chimney Falls

Authorities said she was buried for more than a half-hour by rubble from a falling chimney on the second-floor of the Ben Franklin Store here.

The roof of the store report-

edly caved in, collapsing the chimney on Mrs. Damon.

A doctor at Mercy Hospital, which escaped major damage, estimated there were 300 injured. Many were transferred to hospitals in Waterloo and other towns.

A few windows were broken in the hospital.

Oelwein Mayor Sam Mazziotti gave this account:

"The fire siren came on just before the storm hit. The tornado started a mile south of the city and seemed to follow Highway 150 right into town, then angled northeast out of town.

"At least three-fourths of the city has been hit.

"The siren quit when the power went off. Because of that,

OELWEIN —

Continued on Page Three

## CB efforts are praised

Members of the local citizens band radio club, Cedar Rock CB Club, today expressed appreciation for the many citizens band groups who came to Charles City immediately following last Wednesday's tornado.

Jack Heinselman and Ron Inness expressed special appreciation to the local Sheriff's Dept. Reserves and the Pine Lake Citizen's Band Club from Eldora. "These people worked steadily," Heinselman stated and added that "without their efforts this place would have been complete confusion."

Heinselman and Inness also acknowledged their own club for the tireless efforts they put forth from Wednesday night through Sunday.

## Statement is returned from Minnesota town

Numerous reports have filtered into Charles City of debris and papers being discovered in areas throughout southern Minnesota.

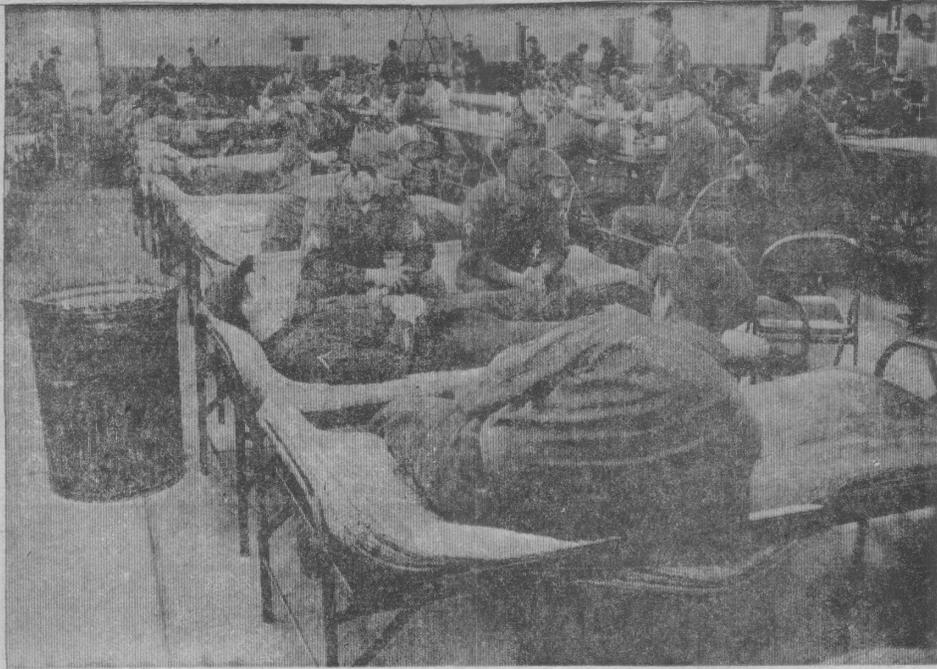
Tuesday morning David Hoeft, R.F. No. 2, Charles City, received a bank statement in the mail being returned to him from Wykoff, Minn. In an accompanying letter, Mrs. Walter Wendorff explained the statement had been found near that small town which she located as being approximately 60 miles from Charles City.



Northwest part of Charles City in the area west of Grand and by Missouri Ave. shows demolished home.



Semi owned by Briggs Transport is upside down. Intensity of storm created complete devastation in many areas.



**ARMORY** on E. Clark St. is headquarters for national guard units, called to Charles City for patrol work. The more than 300 men are bunked and fed here. There are

856 national guardsmen available for duty in northeast Iowa tornado stricken areas: There were 308 called to duty in Charles City, 284 in Oelwein and 30 in Maynard.



*Couple surveys damage*



**THE STRAIN OF LONG HOURS** marks the faces of this trio discussing lists of missing persons at Red Cross headquarters in St. John Lutheran Church. On the phone is Mike Berry and Director Glen Hayden of Mason City and former city councilman John Sebern. The disaster headquarters for the Red Cross was set up within hours after the tornado struck as were similar headquarters for Civil Defense, Salvation Army and other emergency assistance units.

### Arch-bishop tours city

Arch-bishop James J. Byrne of the diocese of Dubuque was in Charles City Sunday inspecting the church, school and other buildings which comprise Immaculate Conception parish.

Fr. John Ryan, pastor of the parish, said Sunday that the arch-bishop conducted a tour of the city by auto and later by National Guard helicopter. Before departing he reported to Fr. Ryan that the entire diocese is taking up a collection with funds to be distributed to Charles City, Oelwein, Elma and any other parish that may have been hit by the tornado.

Funds collected will be distributed on a pro-rated basis depending on the degree of damage.

Fr. Ryan stated that for all practical purposes high school classes have been terminated but graduation exercises will be held. A place and time has yet to be determined and announcement will be made when arrangements are completed.

Tentative plans for completion of the grade school year call for the re-opening of classes Monday May 27.

Fr. Ryan also stated that the Supreme Council of Knights of Columbus have already sent in a check for \$5,000 to be used for clothing, food and medicine. A similar gift of \$500 for general use has been received from Loras College.

### See the Damage

Sight-seers will be welcome at Charles City between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. today on a special route through portions of the tornado-stricken business and residential districts.

They will be asked to give to a "Dollars for Disaster" fund to be channeled to deserving families through Red Cross, said Police Chief John Gordon.

Oelwein police said sight-seers will be allowed in the tornado area this weekend but must keep to marked routes and will not be allowed to stop.



*Cars on Main Street--Part of 1,130 Destroyed*



### **'Disaster Area', \$38-Million Loss**

Gov. Harold E. Hughes Thursday night declared tornado-stricken northeast Iowa a disaster area.

He wired President Johnson asking that "federal assistance be made available to the individuals and communities affected so that the suffering and destruction caused by the storms can be alleviated."

"It is estimated that there is \$33 million damage to private property and \$5 million to public facilities," Hughes told the President.



Among the many volunteers who came to Charles City Friday to aid in the clean-up task was Lu Anne French, 19, of Mason City. She is a student at the Northern Iowa Area Community College.



*The overturned home of Mr. and Mrs. Neal Heckermann*

## Trowbridge center to open on limited basis

Del Trowbridge stated late Friday afternoon that Trowbridge Center will be in operation on a limited basis within two to three weeks. Trowbridge explained that garden shop, service station and the pharmacy will open as quickly as possible and he added that the pharmacy already is operating and filling prescriptions.

"We are in pretty fair condition," Trowbridge stated and explained that insurance claims on the entire business have been satisfied and work will begin immediately to rid the premises of all groceries, meats and merchandise in preparation for new stocks when

opening takes place. At that time the shopping facilities of the super market and department store will provide all new merchandise.

In addition, Trowbridge explained that business interruption insurance has provided that all full-time employees will receive full compensation throughout the period the shopping center will be closed. It is anticipated that a period of four to six months will be required to restore full service at Trowbridge Center.

"As far as the building goes, we're not in too bad shape," Trowbridge explained. "A section of approximately 50x200 ft. along the south wall is where the main damage occurred. The wall was completely destroyed and the roof is gone."

Trowbridge explained that the complete facility will be replaced.



*Bulldozer cleans up on First avenue*



*Trees down in 300 block of Third avenue, S.E.*

# Pulled nail from girl's head after she saved child from storm



Washington School is almost a total loss. It is in the north portion of Charles City, one of heaviest hit areas.

Betsy Crooks, 18, was baby-sitting with the two children of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Ferch at 604 Lane Wednesday.

Just recently married she was waiting for her husband, Roger Crooks, and Leroy Ferch to return from their work. They came into the house just minutes before the tornado struck Charles City. There was no basement to the house so they hit the floor. Betsy Crooks covered 11-month-old Pam with her body on the floor, and Ferch covered his 23-month-old son, Patrick, with his body. "I had the kid real tight under me," said Ferch Thursday afternoon.

The tornado roared through town and the Ferch home became a heap of rubble. Crooks had to dig Ferch and his wife out of the debris.

Ferch said, "Betsy had part of the back of her head gone and there was a 16-penny nail stuck in the back of her head. Roger and I had to pull it out."

"She wouldn't let us carry her. She was bleeding terribly, but she walked with us as far as the bridge before she and her husband were picked up and then taken to the hospital. She had brain surgery today."

Little Pam was bruised, but not seriously injured. Patrick was not hurt.

Mrs. Ferch had been working at the root beer stand and

## Agree to pay rentals for mobile homes

Chamber of Commerce Manager Doug Drown this morning state that some difficulties have been reported by tornado victims of insurance firms not agreeing to complete payment for mobile home rentals. According to the complaints insurance firms have agreed in most instances to pay the living expenses for a selected period but not until the period is complete and this arrangement calls for out-of-pocket payments by the residents.

According to Drown at least three insurance firms have definitely indicated that their company's policies are providing for payment of living expenses as they come due. "In other words," explained Drown, "these companies will pay for mobile home rentals on a monthly basis, plus cover all charges for siting the mobile home on a site."

was in a refrigerator during the tornado. She was just coming across the bridge when the Crooks and Ferch with her children reached the bridge.



House sits askew and apparently balances in this position on foundation. This is in the northwest part of Charles City.



Unbelievable damage was inflicted on residential areas in Charles City. Workers face a tremendous task to remove the tons of rubble such as this.



**SURVEYING THE DAMAGE** to her home at 607 Wisconsin is Mrs. J. L. Atherton. The roof was blown off her home and furniture sucked out of the house. A lone plant by the window was all that remained.

## Tornado facts and humor . . .

Bill Severin, writing in his Waterloo Daily Courier "Iron Duke" column, cited information relating to Charles City's tornado experiences that provide a touch of irony to the current situation.

According to information furnished Severin by Jim Bently of Waterloo, last week's storm here was the fifth to hit in the city or area since its founding and all of the twisters have struck in years ending in eight.

A search of newspaper clippings and other data by Bently providing information that indicated the first storm on the community hit when it was a frontier village. The date was June 8, 1858. Other similar storms have devastated the town on Aug. 31, 1878, striking at 5:05 p. m. and on May 31, 1908 at 5 p. m. On April 28, 1948 at 3 p. m. a tornado hit Ionia. A recent Press feature story recalled the events of that day.

Amid the weight of disaster

there seems always to be touches here and there of lightness. One such incident is reported to have taken place at the Larry Manship residence which was located at 1806 N. Grand.

Larry, who is a supporter of the theory that sleeping without the restraining binds of pajamas or other garb, was in bed at the time the tornado struck. Upon being alerted by his wife, who hastily escorted the family to the basement, Manship arose to sight the storm almost converging on the house and he drew fast retreat to a nearby corner of the bedroom.

After the tornado had passed all that was left above the basement level of the Manship home was Larry's corner and Larry . . . minus his pajamas. A quick survey of the scene led to discovery of his bathrobe snagged on part of the remaining structure and Manship popped into it with lightning speed.

## Hughes asks Johnson for federal aid

DES MOINES (AP) — Gov. Harold Hughes has asked President Johnson for \$2,044,000 in supplemental federal assistance to repair damage to public facilities resulting from last week's tornadoes in and near the communities of Charles City and Oelwein. The governor's telegram said the money is urgently needed. It also noted that the storms resulted in \$53 million in damage and 17 deaths. One of those who died suffered a heart attack several hours after the storm.

The governor described the damage at Charles City as "catastrophic" and said Oelwein and nearby Maynard were badly damaged.

Hughes also reported 370 injured at Charles City and 160 at Oelwein.

The message to the president was sent through the Office of Emergency Planning at Denver.



**LOAD OF CLOTHING AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS** from Dubuque included a baby's bassinet being carried into National Guard Armory on East Clark St. The clothing was collected by Masons and Eastern Star members in Dubuque and was delivered to Charles City by Noel Stetcher

of Key City Transfer Co. and John Sutton, past master of the Masons. Col. Francis Kelly, commanding officer of the national guard, close friend of Sutton, said Sutton, who is a "past everything of the Dubuque Masons," has made the collection of clothing his personal project.



## Charles City's struggle to recover

POLK COUNTY sheriff's posse has been one of the active units in Charles City as they offered aid and manpower to assist in policing the streets. Bob Crawford (left) and David Frakes had two tired horses Saturday night after a busy day. That's Satan at the left center and a sleepy Red at the right. There are 7 men in the posse in Charles City.

### Charles City Deaths

CHARLES CITY, IA. (AP) — Authorities list these persons killed in the Wednesday tornado at Charles City:

Murray Loomer, Mrs. Raymond Chambers, Harry Hall, Arthur Jacobs, August Merten, Mrs. James Gault, Mrs. Carl Wolff, Mrs. Leland Leach, 55, Tom Hall, 16, Marie Greenlees, John Kneisel, Mrs. John Kneisel, Robert Stotts, 22.

## 'START OVER' IN CHARLES CITY

By Nick Lamberto  
(Register Staff Writer)

CHARLES CITY, IA.—At the age of 51, Glen Wilson and his wife, Arlene, are starting over.



DENNIS BARR

As he looked over the remains of their three-bedroom home, Wilson said:

"You don't have much choice. Even if I were 80 years old, I'd start over. That's the only thing you can do."

The Wilson home was one of 372 destroyed by the May 15 tornado that killed 13 persons here and caused damage estimated at \$20 million.

(About 550 homes, 194 businesses, three churches, three

schools and 1,250 automobiles were destroyed or received major or minor damage. the Red Cross reported about 450 persons were injured).

#### Basement Left

Wilson's home on the hard-hit north side of Charles City "cost about \$19,000" and was insured for about \$15,000. The Wilsons had moved into it in April, 1966. Only the basement remains.

"I was offered \$25,000 for it

CHARLES CITY—  
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CHARLES CITY PRESS Charles City, Iowa Mon., May 20, 1968



KITCHEN AT IC SCHOOL shows workers of Salvation Army who have worked around the clock to provide food

and clothing for homeless. Mrs. Ralph Terry, whose husband is captain of the Charles City unit, is at right.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH damaged by the tornado will not be sounding its carillon for some time.

## 'Keep eyes open' is city's warning

"We've got to keep our eyes open," said Gary Darland, city engineer, Wednesday morning as he commented on the hazardous situation of several downtown business buildings.

Darland said some of the buildings are beginning to settle and have a tendency to fall apart. He issued a warning to persons to keep a lookout as they go about.

The Odd Fellows building was checked by Charles Jorgenson, city councilman, who said the crack in one wall is one inch wider today than it was several days ago.

Darland said Clark St. has been barricaded from Main to Wisconsin because of the dangerous condition of the Meusel Hardware building. St. Mary's

on the west side of the Immaculate Conception Church has been blocked off and it is hoped to get an inspection on the church Friday.

"There is no question about the Charles City Paint Store building, 608 Kelly, but what it will have to come down. The front wall of the Wentland bank building at Riverside and Main has pulled out a couple of inches. Another thing, we've got to watch out for falling tree limbs. These limbs are dead now and could come down at any time.

"Rain is another factor. It is helping to deteriorate these buildings. Of course, if we happen to get a wind, and it wouldn't have to be very strong, there's no telling what could happen," said Darland.



REGISTER PHOTO

### Aftermath of Tornado

The country home of Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Eggers northeast of Charles City was hard-hit by the deadly tornado which struck that community May 15. Here the couple and one of their sons, Edward, 6, pose by one of several trees that was upended by the storm on their two-acre country place. The other son, 10-month-old Eugene, was also with the family as they huddled in the basement of their two-story home when the tornado struck. They luckily escaped personal injury. Eggers works for the Oliver Co. in Charles City.



"WE'RE HERE FROM EMMETSBURG" was the message written in green on the apron of these volunteers, and there were shamrocks to decorate the message. Seventeen or twenty members of the Emmetsburg Chamber of Commerce arrived in Charles City Sunday with 500 pounds of minute steaks which they barbecued beside the St. John Lutheran Church. They brought the buns, and trimmings for the cook-out, and the wire baskets that held the charcoal they had brought.



**LIONS FIELD** has become a huge salvage yard as workers continue to use the area to deposit the hundreds of crumpled autos destroyed by last Wednesday's tornado. The damaged cars were initially removed from loca-

tions which may have impaired traffic flow and then later they were brought to Lions Field. One local insurance man stated that "they won't be there long," indicating that salvage buyers will soon acquire the entire lot.



**PICKING UP THE PIECES** at 21st and Missouri is Charles Hardt. The Hardt family lived at this address just over a year after building the home new. Hardt and his two sons, Kim and John, were out for track practice. When he arrived home he found his wife, Betty; and children, Pamela,

Mark and baby Mike safe in the basement. Another daughter, Charlene, was at the A and W Root Beer stand on Main St., where personnel were pushed into the walk-in cooler by Jack Guthart.

# TOLL OF DEAD GOES TO 12 IN CHARLES CITY

**Damage in Millions, Hundreds Hurt**

**Tornado toll in Arkansas hits 43: PAGE 8.**

By Nick Lamberto  
(Register Staff Writer)

**CHARLES CITY, IA.** — By dawn's early light Thursday, it all turned out to be true. It wasn't just a horrible dream.

Lying there starkly naked was half a city, a victim of a ravaging tornado that swept through from the south shortly before 5 p.m. Wednesday.



**JAMES JOHNSON**

Left in the wake of the fierce storm were 12 known dead, 450 injured, and damage estimated in the millions of dollars.

Searchers were still looking for bodies Thursday.

Officials issued an urgent plea Thursday for men and equipment to help clean up the rubble.

An insurance adjuster, Hal Lubbert of Mason City, estimated damage at \$18 million. Mayor Harry L. Brenton put the figure at \$20 million.

After a block-by-block walking survey of the devastated area, Glen Haydon of Mason City,

## Waseca gives helping hand

The street department of Waseca, Minn., including 7 men, with two city trucks, three county trucks and a portable diesel generator arrived in Charles City Thursday to assist several days. The portable diesel generator will be here until power is restored and the generators are no longer needed.

The men were Gordon Ferch, Kenneth Sack, Charles Bartels, Leonard Anderson, Leonard Draheim, all of Waseca; and George Shurson, New Richland, Minn.

These men had experienced a tornado in their community April 30, 1967. Their comment about the tragedy in Charles City was that "They had never seen anything this bad."

executive director of the North Central Iowa Red Cross chapter, listed damages as follows:

**Homes** — Destroyed, 372; major damage, 188; minor damage, 356.

**Businesses** — Destroyed, 58; major damage, 90; minor damage, 46.

**Automobiles** — 1,130 plus destroyed; heavily damaged, 129. (At least two were blown into the Red Cedar River which runs through the city.)

Haydon estimated additional damage in adjacent rural areas at 13 farm homes destroyed, another 13 with major and 8 with minor damage; 7 barns and big outbuildings leveled and 19 trucks or cars destroyed.

Gov. Harold E. Hughes and Maj. Gen. Junior Miller, Iowa adjutant general, paid the city a visit after they had toured the

**CHARLES CITY** —  
Continued on Page Nine

# Wind in Iowa Tornado: 528 Miles an Hour!

By Elizabeth Clarkson Zwart

Last Sunday morning, Paul Waite, the U.S. Weather Bureau's Iowa climatologist, and Clarence Lamoureux, chief of the Bureau's station in Des Moines, were among the many who marveled at a big photograph in The Des Moines Sunday Register.

There, churning northeast up the page, was the vicious coil of one of Nature's blackest brainstorms — a tornado.

This one had sucked half of Charles City into its wild belly. It had snatched life, treasure, history — but it had left some of its savage self behind.

And two days after the funnel had roared through, Larry Niebergall of The Register had photographed its crazy wake from a plane almost 3,000 feet above the ground.

Only once before had Paul Waite and Clarence Lamoureux seen anything similar to this fine picture.

In a Weather Bureau photograph of a devastating tornado snapped at Scottsbluff, Neb., in 1955 they had studied dim shapes which they now saw much more clearly — shapes from which, given other available information, they could estimate the wind speed inside the funnel that had just stunned this State.

The two men drove to Charles City where road guards know what they were inquiring about because they, too, had seen The Register's picture.

The guards directed the meteorologists to a farm northeast of town.

There, with the news photo as a topographical map, and with a long tape in hand, the two men walked across Claire Jaeger's fields looking for something they feared could not be seen by groundings.

But then they came upon it — shredded debris flung in a

great circle — not an ellipse in a spiral of ellipses, but an isolated circle.

## 360-Foot Ring

Dropping the tape, Paul Waite stepped off the ring's diameter at 360 feet.

After the tornado had savaged this land, the rain had continued, and the chopped-up debris — much of it bits of cornstalk — had adhered to the soil, almost like a papier mache.

Continuing northeast from the ring, the men descended a knoll, coming down into the long field with the great spiraling twisting the length of it, as it did in the newspaper that was guiding them.

Here, the meteorologists stepped off and averaged the circumferences of the whorls and the distances between their overlapping arcs.

## Their Equation

Then, with the forward speed of the storm which by radar had been recorded at 40 m.p.h., they had their equation:

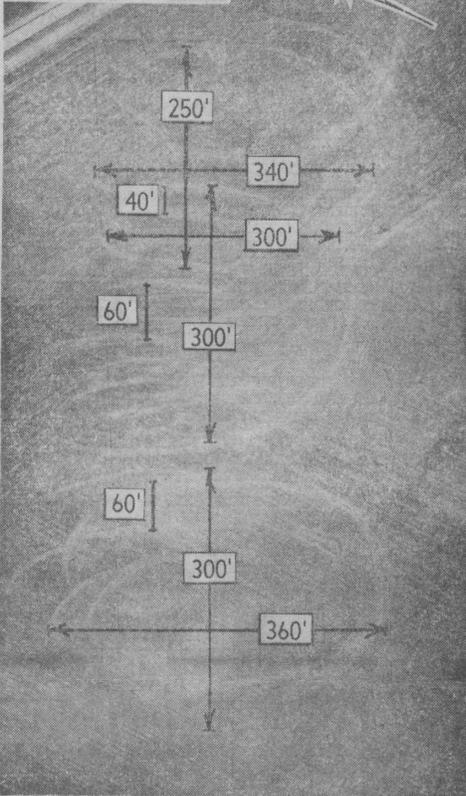
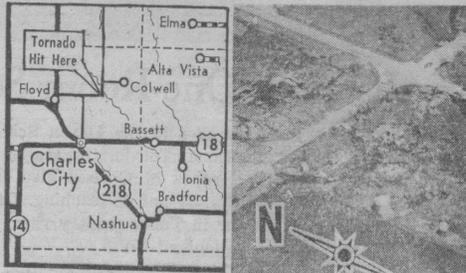
$V=CNS$  (Velocity equals the average of the circumferences of the ellipses, times the number of rings per mile, times the forward speed of the funnel.)

Here, the wind speed inside this seasonal storm had been 528 miles per hour.

With their measurements of the ring pattern laid down in Floyd County, the local meteorologists think they have come up with a reasonably accurate wind speed.

Only once before has man been able to measure the velocity inside the structure of a tornado, the local meteorologists believe.

This force has been computed theoretically, but the 428 m.p.h. at Scottsbluff and the 528 m.p.h. at Charles City are the only man-made measurements, the Des Moines men think.



The swirls of an Iowa tornado as measured by Paul Waite and Clarence Lamoureux of the U.S. Weather Bureau in Des Moines.

## Oelwein Begins to Dig Out; Order Charles City Curfew

### Phone, Electric Service Back

By Jack Hovelson  
(Register Staff Writer)

OELWEIN, IA. — Oelwein was beginning to look more like a city again Friday.

The mess was still there — and will be for some time to come—but here and there a street showed through where before there had been a forest of uprooted, twisted trees.

The jingle of telephone bells could be heard in some homes and offices where there had been no outside communication since 4:57 p.m. Wednesday when the tornado struck.

Electric lights were shining into some corners darkened for nearly two days.

The main arteries through Oelwein were nearly swept clean, as if in anticipation of the show the city will put on Sunday for the thousands expected to drive here to view the aftermath of the tornado that left two dead, up to 200 injured and more than 1,000 homeless.

Mayor Sam Mazziotti met

OELWEIN —  
Continued on Page Three

### Ban Everyone From Debris

By Gene Raffensperger  
(Register Staff Writer)

CHARLES CITY, IA. — Mayor Harry Brenton Friday put a strict dark-to-dawn curfew on the 90-block tornado disaster area in Charles City.

"No one will be allowed into the area after 8:30 p.m., and after 9:30 p.m. everyone must be out," said the mayor.

He said the curfew applies to everyone, including those residents who have been working at salvaging possessions from their homes.

"In other words, there will be no one in the disaster area after 9:30 p.m. and until dawn except the National Guard and the police," said the mayor.

### Armed Guardsmen

After the curfew went into effect Friday, the National Guard patrolled the area in jeeps while armed Guardsmen stood sentry duty at every road leading into the damaged area.

Mayor Brenton explained the curfew was ordered so property in the damaged area could be protected.

There has been little

looting in Charles City, police said.

Mayor Brenton said he issued the curfew order at the request of the National Guard and the Highway Patrol.

A Guard spokesman said that when darkness falls, it is practically impossible for Guardsmen to distinguish residents from strangers among those picking and probing through wreckage of homes and buildings.

Mayor Brenton said the nighttime curfew will remain in effect "until further notice."

He said there is absolutely no chance that sight-seers and the curious will be allowed into the city this weekend.

Highway patrolmen and the National Guard have manned roadblocks at all entrances to Charles City since Wednesday night, the day the tornado struck here.

Those involved in the cleanup and other such tasks are is-

### Safety tips for workers

It's important to wear protective clothing as you do after-storm clean up in damaged homes or community buildings advises Phyllis Seymour, Extension Home Economist.

Wear firm leather shoes or boots to protect your feet from sharp objects, rusty nails, and bruises.

When working on ceilings, walls and wood trim, wear glasses and a hat with brim to protect eyes, face and neck; also use long handled brushes or brooms.

Leather gloves worn for dry work and rubber gloves for cleaning with water will provide added protection from contact with pulverized glass, insulation and other foreign, sharp or contaminated particles. Change cleaning rags and water frequently during first clean up periods.

Last, but of utmost importance for personal protection, is to be sure you have your tetanus and typhoid shots.

## After Nightmare,

# Iowans Awake to Grim Reality



THE TORNADO'S PATH can be clearly seen in this aerial photo. Scattered debris outlines how the storm swirled from a southerly direction, followed Freeman St. and leaping across the Cedar River traveled northeasterly along

Wisconsin St. At the end of Wisconsin St. the tornado scooted northward along Grand Ave. and then into the rural areas.

—Photo by James Shaffer

## Loss Estimated At \$18 Million

By Nick Lamberto  
(Register Staff Writer)

CHARLES CITY, IA. — A tornado blasted through this city of 10,419 about 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, devastating an area seven blocks wide and 1½ miles long. The Iowa Highway Patrol said at least seven persons were killed.

The Red Cross said between 200 and 300 persons were injured.

"There was tremendous devastation," said Glen Haydon of

### NAMES OF DEAD

CHARLES CITY, IA. — The names of seven of the dead in the tornado that struck Charles City Wednesday are:

Murray Loomer, Mrs. Ray Chambers, Harry Hall, Arthur Jacobs, August Merten, Mrs. James Gault, Mrs. Carl Wolff.

The names were released by James Johnson, Floyd County Memorial Hospital administrator.

Mason City, executive director of the North Central Iowa Chapter of the Red Cross.

A home for the elderly, with 80 apartments, was reported leveled by the storm. The home was located at the junction of Highways 218 and 18 in south Charles City.

### City Hall Hit

The whole front was ripped off City Hall and the adjoining fire station.

Hal Lubbart, 33, of Mason City, an insurance adjuster, estimated the damage at \$18 million.

He said he estimated the Belmont tornado damage at \$8½

CHARLES CITY —

Continued on Page Three

# Looting Began in Charles City 20 Minutes After Tornado Hit

## CHARLES CITY---

Continued From Page 9

Red Cross Headquarters at St. John's Lutheran Church resembled wartime refugees. They were seeking food and shelter and word about relatives and friends.

### Water Problem

Obtaining drinking water was a problem. Tank trucks brought some into the city and by mid-day Thursday a number of ruptured water lines had been repaired. But residents were asked to use water sparingly.

Cold rain fell in many different showers immediately after the tornado. It drenched lawns and people. Thursday a cold wind chilled the area.

Sheriff Lane said the first problem is to get the streets cleared so traffic can move. A stream of volunteer workers registered at the sheriff's office.

Chain saws whined in the background as big trunks of

## The Victims

The victims of Wednesday's tornadoes in Iowa:

**Charles City**—12 dead, 9 identified: Murray Boomer, Mrs. Ray Chambers, Harry Hall, Arthur Jacobs, August Merten, Mrs. James Gault, Mrs. Carl Wolff, Mrs. Leland Leach and Mrs. Marie Greenless.

**Oelwein**—One dead: Mrs. Donald Damon.

**Maynard**—2 dead: Mrs. Louis Ponsa and Glenda Kelly, 3.

downed trees were reduced to smaller logs so they could be hauled away.

"I don't know where we'll put the rubbish," Sheriff Lane said. "We don't have room at the dump."

Hundreds of high school and college youths showed up to work. Trucks, tractors and construction machinery came from as far away as Spencer.

### Roads Blocked

The State Highway Patrol and officers from other cities and counties manned roadblocks to keep sight-seers away.

Iowa National Guard troops helped guard the 105-block area to prevent looting. Seven agents of the Iowa Bureau of Criminal Investigation were also on hand.

The Northwestern Bell Telephone Co. reported 4,000 telephones in Charles City and 740 in adjacent rural areas were



REGISTER PHOTO

## Hughes Surveys Tornado Damage

Iowa Gov. Harold Hughes, left, and Maj. Gen. left, survey tornado damage Thursday afternoon at Charles City. Others are not identified.

knocked out by the storm. Part of the telephone building roof and a wall were torn off.

The twister tore off a door and blew out windows in the office where four telephone operators were at work. They put plastic covers over the switchboard and started handling emergency calls.

Looting caused some problem until National Guardsmen and peace officers blocked off the downtown area.

### Plans Curfew

Lt. Col. Francis Kelly of Dubuque, commander of 140 Guardsmen here, 100 at Oelwein and 20 at Maynard, said he plans to suggest a 9 p.m. curfew.

Sheriff Lane said that not more than 20 minutes after the storm hit "the thieves were at it," stealing articles from damaged stores.

A health official said the injuries ranged from concussions to broken backs. "Name it, we have it," he said.

Amateur radio operators received inquiries from all over

the country and passed them on to the Red Cross. Most were inquiries about relatives.

One Air Force sergeant refused to go into surgery at Eglin Base, Fla., until sure his sister here was all right.

### Cars Bent

Cars bent into V shapes or mashed like accordions could be seen almost anywhere. Some cars were thrown through display windows.

An ecumenical spirit also was apparent. Several nuns from Immaculate Conception school, including Sister Mary Redempta, the principal, the Sister Mary Honora, helped prepare food at the Lutheran Church kitchen.

The Salvation Army fed many at tables set up at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.

### TRAIN TUMBLES

DELPHI, IND. (AP) — The diesel engine of a Norfolk & Western passenger train tumbled 30 feet Thursday into a washout left by a flash flood. One minor injury was reported.



GOV. HAROLD HUGHES was in Charles City Thursday morning to view the tornado-damaged city. He was in conference with Mayor Harry Brenton, center, and Councilman Robert Hildebrand. (Charles City Press Photo)



REGISTER PHOTOS BY WILLIAM DABY

The twister pounced on this Oelwein residential neighborhood, ripping houses apart as if they were made of paper.

## *At Least 8 Die, Hundreds Hurt*

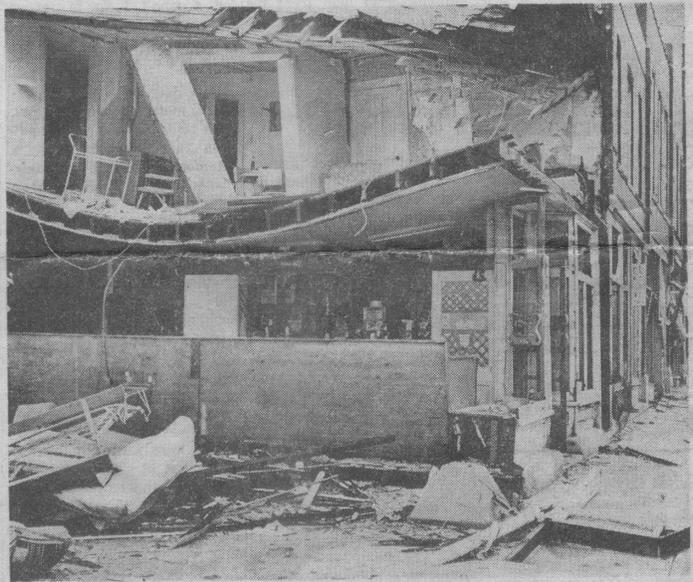
Oelwein and Charles City were devastated by separate tornadoes Wednesday afternoon in a double disaster almost unprecedented in Iowa history.

At least 8 deaths—7 in Charles City and one in Oelwein—were reported and the storms caused hundreds of injuries in both cities.

The devastation climaxed a day of severe storms all across the state that left a number of smaller communities damaged by tornadoes, hail and high winds.

Charles City, population 10,419, was struck shortly after 4:30 p.m. by a storm that was first sighted over Hansell, in Franklin County. The storm moved in a straight line from there over Aredale and Marble Rock to Charles City.

Oelwein, population 8,282, was hit shortly after 5 p.m. The twister there touched down about a mile south of town and blasted a path straight through the city to the north.



Many Charles City dwellings were demolished, many damaged in the town of about 10,000 in northeast Iowa. This is an apartment in the business district.



The tornado laid bare the showroom of an Oelwein auto dealer in the downtown section.

## City Prepares to Bury It's Dead

Charles City was preparing Friday to bury its dead, while the search still continues for other possible victims of Wednesday's tornado, which roared out of the south.

The list of 14 known dead includes: Murray Loomer, Mrs. Raymond Chambers, Harry Hall, Arthur Jacobs, August Merten, Mrs. James Gault, Mrs. Carl Wolff, Mrs. Leland Leach, 55, Tom Hall, 16, Marie Greenless, John Kneisel, Mrs. John Kneisel, Robert Stott, 22 and Mrs. Vivel Dawson, 45.

Identification of Stott, a student teacher from the Univers-

ity of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, was made Thursday by his twin brother and father. Stott had been taken to Mitchell County Memorial Hospital and was dead on arrival.

When found in the Trowbridge area, he had no clothing on. It is believed he was sitting in his Volkswagen in the parking lot. The car was blown across the street. The sheriff's office from Mitchell County aided in identification by sending photographs to the University.

Mrs. Greenless is the former operator of the antique shop on Gilbert St. near the housing

development. Her body was found in the housing development wreckage.

Mrs. Leach lived at 1707 N. Grand Ave., an area wiped out by the tornado.

Funeral arrangements as of Friday noon were: August Merten, Marie Greenless and Arthur Jacobs, Saturday, 2 p.m., St. John Lutheran Church, the Rev. Richard Trost and the Rev. Perry Brown officiating, Hage Funeral Home. Burial for Mr. Merten and Mrs. Greenless in Riverside Cemetery.

Mrs. Carl Wolff, 77, killed in her home of 49 years at 609

Freeman, Saturday, 11 a.m., at Hage Funeral Home. Delmas Luedke officiating. Burial Riverside Cemetery.

Mrs. James Gault, 85, Route 2, incomplete at Hage Funeral Home.

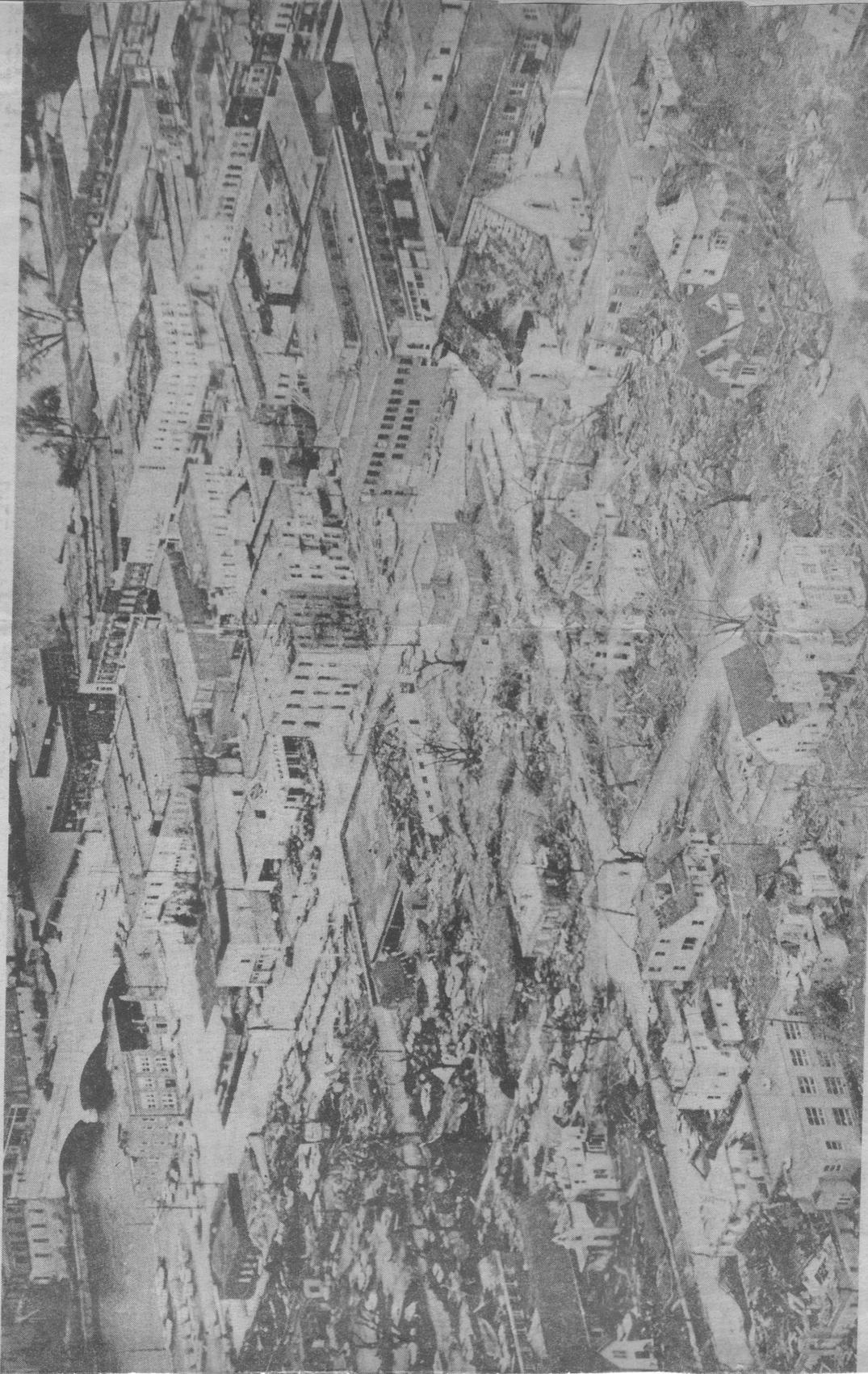
Mr. and Mrs. John Kneisel, her age listed 83, tentatively Tuesday at Hage Funeral Home in cooperation with Hauser Funeral Home. The Kneisels were found late Tuesday night or early Wednesday in wreckage at Cedar Terrace, housing for elderly.

Robert Stott, 23, Gowrie, rites will be in Gowrie.

Funeral services will be Saturday at 1:30 p.m. for Orla Crandall, 63, at Hage Funeral Home with the Rev. Roland Ritter of the First Methodist Church officiating. Mr. Crandall died early Wednesday as the result of injuries received about 5:30 p.m. when his station wagon struck the abutment at Niles Corner bridge. Burial will be in Sunnyside Memory Gardens. Crandall was the father of James Crandall, whose new home on Missouri Ave. was leveled by the tornado.

# 4 What's Left of Charles City After the Tornado

Des Moines Reg  
Fri., May 17, 1968



An aerial view of Charles City's downtown area after Wednesday's devastating tornado  
Register photos by George Ceolla and David P.

REGISTER AERIAL PHOTO BY LARRY NEIBERGALL

## Spiral of Destruction

The mark of a killer tornado was etched into this farm field near Floyd County road intersection several miles northeast of Charles City last Wednesday. The tornado cut through the field and slammed into the farms of Claire Jaeger and Wayne Stratton, top, and destroyed the farm houses and most outbuildings.

## COLD PLAGUES WORKERS IN CHARLES CITY

### Nature Hampering Tornado Clean-up

By Gene Raffensperger  
(Register Staff Writer)

CHARLES CITY, IA. — Nature tightened the screws on Charles City Saturday.



HARRY  
BRENTON

Three days after a killer tornado buzz-sawed 90 blocks of the city and killed 14 persons, cold rain punished victims and rescue workers in the ruined neighborhoods. The bad weather and the strain of tending the needs of a battered city sapped some spirits and shortened a few tempers.

These were the developments Saturday:

Sheriff L. L. Lane said his official casualty list contains only 13 names. Other reports have listed 14 dead in Charles City.

The sheriff said the name Tom Hall has been listed among the dead.

"We cannot find any trace of his being treated in any hospital

## No Sight-seers

No sight-seers will be allowed in Charles City or Oelwein today or in the near future, officials said Saturday. Roadblocks outside the tornado areas are manned by Iowa National Guardsmen and Iowa Highway Patrol members.

and no funeral home in northeast Iowa has any record of him," said the sheriff.

### More Victims

Lane and Police Chief John Gordon both said they feel it is possible more victims lie under the wreckage of homes in Charles City. In many cases, the sheriff pointed out, caved-in houses have not been checked by rescue workers.

Mayor Harry Brenton modified his earlier "strict" night curfew for the damage area after Sheriff Lane complained that the rigid ruling prevented some Charles City residents from reaching their jobs Friday night. Brenton said the ruling would permit people to cross the area on the way to work.

The City Council approved a plan to completely clear the block-square Central Park on Main street and allow local businessmen to set up temporary offices there.

The council also discussed the possibility of leasing mobile homes so that some of the 500 homeless here can put them on the sites of their demolished homes and live in the mobile homes until permanent housing is arranged.

Bob Hildebrand, councilman at large and mayor pro tem, said he does not believe the city can do more than arrange for the leasing, and that costs would be up to the individual family who used one.

### Cancel Classes

School Superintendent Harry Eastman said the school board met Saturday and decided to

CHARLES CITY —

Continued on Page Three



REGISTER PHOTOS

### Time Out During the Clean-up

Members of a Charles City family and a friend take a breather Friday while attempting to gather items from their heavily damaged home. The workers include, from left: Tracy Sweet, Mrs. Lowell Sweet, his mother; Mrs. Van Fliger, and Sweet's wife. Sweet gets about with the aid of crutches. He suffered a leg injury before the tornado.



REGISTER PHOTO BY LARRY NEIBERGALL

### Picking Up the Pieces

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Long of Charles City Friday attempt to pick up the usable remains from their home, background, which was shattered by Wednesday's tornado. Long is an insurance adjuster.



## GIVE 10 TONS OF SURPLUS FOOD

More than 10 tons of surplus food commodities have been trucked into Charles City and Oelwein to feed tornado victims.

Chopped meat, cheese, peanut butter, dry milk and other foods were distributed to an estimated 5,000 persons at St. John's Lutheran Church in Charles City Thursday.

In Oelwein, the foods were being handed out at Sacred Heart Catholic Church and at Salvation Army headquarters.

The foods, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's commodity supplies for schools, institutions and needy families, were dispatched from Waterloo by the Black Hawk County Department of Social Welfare.

The mass feeding operations will continue as long as needed, the Department of Agriculture office in Chicago said.

### PAPERS, RADIO

Newspapers and radio stations in tornado-stricken Charles City and Oelwein continued to serve their people Thursday.

The Oelwein Daily Register took its copy to Independence for printing, while Thursday's Charles City Press was printed at Vinton.

Stations KOEL at Oelwein and KCHA at Charles City returned to the air on an emergency basis after being silenced temporarily Wednesday when tornadoes damaged their equipment and interrupted their electric power.

### ACCOUNTANTS' AID

The Iowa Society of Certified Public Accountants will supply a team of its members to help Charles City and Oelwein businesses get back on their feet, Jerry J. Perpich of Des Moines, society president, said Thursday.

Perpich said he has already made arrangements for the C.P.A.s to work with the Small Business Administration, which will establish offices in the two tornado-stricken areas within a few days.

The C.P.A.s will work without compensation, he said.

### JUST IN TIME

Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church at Maynard bought \$141,500 in insurance from Iowa Kemper Mutual Insurance Co. of Mason City. The policy went into effect at noon Wednesday; five hours later the

church was a total loss and will collect the full amount of the policy.

### HARLAN DRIVE

HARLAN, IA. — Dr. K. L. Mueller, mayor of Harlan, Thursday announced a disaster fund drive was being set up in Harlan by a group of civic leaders to help storm-torn Charles City and Oelwein.

The Harlan Ministerial Association, civic clubs and the Chamber of Commerce were asked to help in the drive.

E. A. Andreasen, president of the Chamber, said initial contributions toward a goal of \$4,000 were \$1,525.

### ADVENTISTS' AID

The Iowa Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Des Moines said disaster relief crews from Mason City and Indianola have gone to Charles City, and crews from Waukon and Waterloo to Oelwein.

The teams took clothing, sheets and blankets, to be distributed at clothing centers.

The Rev. F. J. Kinsey, head of the church's Iowa home missions program, left Des Moines with a trailer load of bedding and clothing for Charles City.

### INSURANCE WOES

Insurance adjusters have reported difficulties in getting into the Charles City and Oelwein areas. Some were not allowed to pass by roadblocks set up outside the communities; others said they were given one-day passes.

Because of the heavy losses and number of claims involved, adjusters from outside Iowa were called in to assist local insurance men.

Spot settlements are being made in some cases, while in others advance payments are being made on some losses to provide immediate funds.

### STUDENTS HELP

Responding to the plight of tornado-stricken Charles City, nearly 100 students from high schools, junior colleges and universities have deserted their studies to offer help.

"When you hear about something like this, you just can't sit around and do nothing," said Dianne Rottinghaus of Nora Springs, a 19-year-old freshman at Northern Iowa Community College at Mason City.

The students helped the injured and homeless, assisted in the clearing of rubble and offered support to Red Cross and civil defense officials.



A STRATEGICALLY PLACED sign lends a touch of levity to an otherwise desolate scene at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Kirkham at 1011 Hildreth.



AN IRONIC DISCOVERY was made by Pam Ritter, 14 year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Ritter, 306 6th St. Pam found the above picture post card near 801 S. Main and the photo shows a scene from the June 7, 1908 cyclone that hit Charles City. Writing on the post card indicates the home in foreground was that of the Art Hunters and home at rear belonged to a family described only as Moosdorf. Pam found the picture among debris over the weekend. Ritter is city councilman from the fourth ward.



*Mrs. Garnett Stokesberry checks damage*



**THIS STREET SIGN** was rescued from the debris and installed on a somewhat shortened makeshift post. Even Charles City residents who have lived here many many years have difficulty finding their way around in some areas . . . there are no distinguishing landmarks, no street signs, no house numbers. This sign was resurrected by proud and brave residents in one of the hardest hit areas.



Most of the tornado deaths in Iowa were recorded in Charles City, where many were critically injured. Dr. Philip Tenney of Independence treats one of the injured.





**WORKING LONG AND HARD** hours to restore utilities to Charles City were men, like these two (left) from Cedar Falls repairing Northwestern Bell Telephone Co. lines and at (right) Wyatt Osborne of Lake City with Iowa



Public Service. Utilities repairmen were on the job as quickly as possible and Charles City is being restored to normal conditions as soon as humanly possible.



## Belmond Remembers-- Rushes Aid to Torn City

By Robert Kistler  
(Register Staff Writer)

BELMOND, IA. — "You don't say anything to people who have just been blown all to hell," said Dr. Robert Misner Wednesday night. "You just shut up and send help."

Misner should know. On Oct. 14, 1966, he found himself mayor of a gutted town that had been swept up in a tornado's insensitive fury.

The Belmont story: 6 dead, 172 injured, 120 homes destroyed, 85 per cent of the business district in rubble, \$7.5 million damage. A town virtually ripped apart.

Drawing on Belmont's experience, Misner had this to say to the victims of Wednesday's tornadoes:

"Tell those poor people not to be afraid of the stupor and the sickening hysteria in their stomachs. People will be vomiting and walking around with glassy eyes for two days.

"Those two days are the toughest any town can have. But, no matter how hopeless it looks, no matter the human hurt, they can whip it.

"Right now, their first job is to keep faith with each other and in God, then start digging people out. Help's on the way."

### Belmond Cadre

Less than two hours after word of the Charles City destruction reached Belmont, Mayor Floyd Broshar was calmly putting together a cadre of Belmont tornado veterans to go to Charles City, about 60 miles northeast of here.

The first cadre of experts dispatched from Belmont included Police Chief Faye Withers, Fire Chief Bud Packard, four electricians in the Belmont Fire Department plus about 50 per cent of the department's regular firemen and a surgeon, Dr. A. F. Benetti.

"They will stay as long as they're needed," Broshar said. "As soon as things settle a little, we'll be sending a lot of private volunteers."

Storm clouds near Belmont Wednesday produced a particu-

larly acute uneasiness for residents here. "We're still pretty gun shy when it comes to black clouds," Misner said.

Nineteen months ago, the blackness had settled over Belmont and the high school's homecoming parade at 2:56 p.m. The monster winds flattened an eight-block area in the city.

### History of Tornadoes

Iowa has had a long history of killer tornadoes.

The first record of a twister in what is now Iowa was noted by Capt. William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who saw tornado damage in southwestern Iowa in 1693.

Historically, Iowa's worst killer storms came before the turn of the century:

**June 3, 1860** — The Clinton-Camanche twister claimed 134 lives, one of the highest storm death tolls in the state's history.

**June 17, 1882**—Buildings in Grinnell were crushed into shapeless wrecks as more than 100 lost their lives.

In more recent years, deaths from tornadoes have dropped, but the number of tornadoes has stayed about the same — an average of 15 a year.

There were 54 twisters confirmed in 1964, probably the most in any one year. But only one person died.

Other recent damaging tornadoes include:

**Apr. 5, 1954**—A tornado in Page County in southwest Iowa wrecked several farm homes, caused some minor injuries and killed livestock.

**May 9 and 10, 1959**—Tornadoes caused heavy damage in Guthrie County, at Avon Lake south of Des Moines and on the north edge of Des Moines.

**May 20, 1959**—Five persons were hurt and farms were damaged near Promise City in Wayne County.

**Apr. 23, 1961**—One person died and 22 were hurt in tornadoes at Marshalltown, Garrison, Mount Avr, Leon, Centerville and Allerton.

**May 7, 1964**—A tornado injured about 20 after slashing through an exclusive residential area of Waterloo.

**May 5, 1965**—A twister caused extensive farm damage and injured 11 persons near Osage in Mitchell County.

**Apr. 19, 1966**—A series of tornadoes struck the Quad-Cities area, causing a few minor injuries and damaging homes.

**June 11, 1966**—A tornado brushed past Des Moines to the east, touching down near Altoona and causing minor damage.





Gazing in what must have been disbelief, an unidentified youth looks down at automobile in rubble of Charles City's Lindemere Dairy.



## News media launch tornado fund drives

Collection of funds for tornado-stricken areas in Charles City, Oelwein and Maynard are being carried on and reports coming in to the Press office indicate that more than \$27,000 has been collected.

Ray Rorick, publisher of the Mason City Globe-Gazette, said Friday morning that a check for \$10,000 is being mailed today to the city of Charles City. More than \$12,000 has been sent to the Globe-Gazette fund launched the morning after the storm. Before any public announcement of the fund, Robert Isensee, president of the United Home Bank, Mason City, brought a check for \$1,000 to the Globe Gazette and the newspaper employees there gave \$100 that morning. The Globe Gazette gave a \$1,000 check that morning. Rorick and Jack MacNider, president of Northwestern States Portland Cement Co., were in Charles City Sunday morning to tour the city.

The Globe-Gazette fund is for Charles City and with the consent of Mayor Harry Bren-

ton \$1,000 was given to Elma for their disaster victims.

WMT-Radio and TV, Cedar Rapids, has collected \$12,516.87, reports Leo Cole, business manager. This Northeast Iowa Disaster fund will be turned over to the North Central Chapter of the Red Cross for disbursement to the areas. Contributions in the Cedar Rapids area also are being made directly to the Red Cross there.

Cole said Friday morning. "The contributions are still coming in and we haven't opened today's mail yet. We'll be continuing through the week. Contributions are running better than \$15 average."

WHO-Radio and TV, Des Moines, has launched a fund and checks are being made out to TORNADO, and also will be dispensed to the three disaster areas. Managers of the fund, Robert Harter, general manager of the firm; Robert Gifford, radio program director; and Al Barcheski, TV program director, were unavailable for comment Friday

morning so no total was available.

Virgil Jacobson, city treasurer, said that as of Friday \$4,185 has actually been received. He has been appointed official treasurer for these funds.

## Aid Pours to Stricken City

It is unbelievable the amount of people who have poured into Charles City to help. Everywhere there are people working, telephone linemen, national guardsmen, ambulance drivers, firemen, the Red Cross, and just plain people with seemingly no distinguishing marks, other than a pair of willing hands.

The list of people who have come to Charles City will be long... there may be names who will be omitted or towns which may not receive credit, but everything is highly appreciated and almost incomprehensible to Charles Citizens.

The Black Hawk County sheriff's auxiliary supplied 15 men under the direction of William Galbraith, who is employed by the Waterloo telephone company. Galbraith said Wednesday night, "I'll be back here tomorrow, one way or the other."

The Hardin County emergency squad from Iowa Falls included 15 auxiliary police, and nearly all of the regular police department. Their unit supplied light at the intersection of Main and Riverside.

Charles Williams, Des Moines, of the state treasurer's office, happened to be in town and pitched in to help direct pedestrian traffic.

The Belmond Fire Department, Osage Jaycees, Junior Red Cross and 24 members of the Osage American Legion

were here Wednesday night. The Legion was primarily concerned with halting looting in the northwest section.

The Citizens Band operators were here, headed by John Hill, a student at Wartburg College, who manned the control car at Obie's Standard Station, S. Main. Dave Harrenstien, Hampton, coordinator for Franklin County, and Chuck Angel, Waterloo, coordinator for Black Hawk County, set up equipment in the basement of the courthouse and transmitted messages. They placed calls to Dubuque and Minneapolis for medical supplies and handled Red Cross information.

The area national guard supplied 105 men Wednesday night, 1/2 of headquarters company stationed in Waterloo, said Capt. Gary Lovik. Mason City guardsmen also answered the call. Local guardsmen could be recognized on the streets.

Units from the Clear Lake fire department and Independent Telephone Co., and six members of the Junior Red Cross came. There were firemen from Rudd and Rockford, and auxiliary police units from Chickasaw County and Storm Lake; the Webster City street department moved in with several large trucks. An uncounted number of civil defense units emerged upon Charles City. There were 21 members of the Sioux City unit, headed by M.

G. Fogleman, communications, and Paul Babinette, who operates the state military affiliated radio system. They drove eight hours to cover the 240 miles.

The Press staff is making an attempt to list all units and towns who are helping. In the meantime, all we can say is "Thanks" and "God Bless You."

### DESTROY FOOD

State Health Department officials this morning issued a warning to Charles City area residents to be mindful of the possibilities of ptomaine poisoning developing in insufficiently refrigerated foodstuffs.

Persons are advised to destroy food if there is any question as to its condition.

### CALLS HOME FROM GERMANY

Sp/5 Darrell Ross, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Ross, 31 15th Ave., telephoned his parents Saturday night from Pfla, Germany, where he is stationed. He had read about the tornado in a German newspaper where it made front page headlines. The story carried a picture of Trowbridge Super Market. The Ross family had received damage to the garage of their home as some siding had been broken where the telephone wire was ripped from the house.

## More Aid For City

Aid continues to pour into Charles City as hundreds of workers with equipment converge upon this disaster stricken community in efforts to get the "town back on its feet."

St. Paul has sent an emergency rescue team and Red Cross workers from there are on the job at headquarter at St. John Lutheran Church.

Glazing companies have sent crews in to install windows. Hampton national guardsmen has 86 enlisted men and four officers on the scene.

Charles City police Capt. Ralph Milhan reported six mounted police from Des Moines are expected. Other police groups at Charles City are from Cedar Falls, Storm Lake, Iowa Falls, Osage and special deputies from Osage, four carloads from the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, police from Garner, Plainfield and Rudd and fire departments from Colwell and New Hampton and a rescue squad from Nora Springs.

Several business places in Charles City have reopened to provide service or access to supplies and equipment.

# Their Tragedy: A Farmstead Gone With the Wind

By Don Muhm

(The Register's Farm Editor)

CHARLES CITY, IA.—These people are very lucky," said the insurance adjuster about the Claire Jaeger family as he sat in his car with official-looking papers spread across the seats.



The observer who dropped in on the Jaeger farm couldn't at first buy his description that the farm family was "lucky."

The Jaeger farmstead six miles northeast of Charles City had been wiped out — completely obliterated — by the killer tornado that roared and twisted across this area May 15.

Everything about their farmstead was destroyed — the 40-year-old two-story farm home, the buildings, the barn, the livestock facilities, and

most of the farm machinery that had been on the premises.

Cattle and hogs did not escape. Several head were killed during the storm, while several more animals had to be destroyed afterward.

Lucky? How could this family of five that faced such dangers and suffered such losses possibly be described as "lucky?"

The insurance adjuster explained:

"They're lucky to be alive."

Indeed, in this respect, the Jaegers were lucky.

**THE FIVE MEMBERS** of the family were together when the tornado whipped out of the southwest and struck the farmstead on which the parents have lived for 17 years.

Mrs. Jaeger and her two daughters, Linda, 18, and Donna, 15, were at home.

At first, they spotted what they thought was smoke in the

late afternoon sky on the horizon where Charles City is located. Suddenly, Mrs. Jaeger related, it dawned on them that the "smoke" wasn't smoke at all.

It was a tornado.

About this same time Jaeger, 47, and his son, Duane, 21, were coming to the farmstead in their pickup. They had seen the dark, sinister cloud and drove faster to get to the farm.

They made it in time to park the pickup near the house. Jaeger — anticipating the worst — threw the main switch which stopped the flow of electricity to the farmstead.

A neighbor, Lowell Head, was also on the road that afternoon. He saw he couldn't make it home, so turned into the Jaeger driveway to seek refuge there.

The six persons — the Jaegers and Head — were huddled in the southwest corner



CLAIRE JAEGER

MRS. CLAIRE JAEGER

of the farm home basement when all hell broke loose.

"It sounded like a roar that kept getting louder and louder," Mrs. Jaeger related.

"Then it seemed to explode right on us. I heard glass breaking and wood splitting.

"We kept fighting for something like 3 to 4 minutes to keep things from hitting us."

The pickup truck that Jaeger had parked near the house, crashed down toward the basement, and — fortunately — hung by a bumper.

But the vehicle, in its partial tumble into the basement, struck Duane Jaeger.

There were no other injuries during the tornado. However, Linda stepped on a nail afterward. Both she and Duane were taken to New Hampton for treatment, since the Charles City hospital was full.

**THE JAEGERS** are living now with relatives. A friend loaned them a pickup camper for use as a "head-quarters" building at their 314-acre farm.

Their immediate chore is to pull together the semblance of a farmstead from the rubble that was scattered by the great tornado over acres and acres of land.

Their financial losses, of course, are only partially covered by insurance.

And their plans for rebuilding are not definite. Mrs. Jaeger could not say just how many of the 14 buildings and the farm home destroyed by the tornado would be replaced.

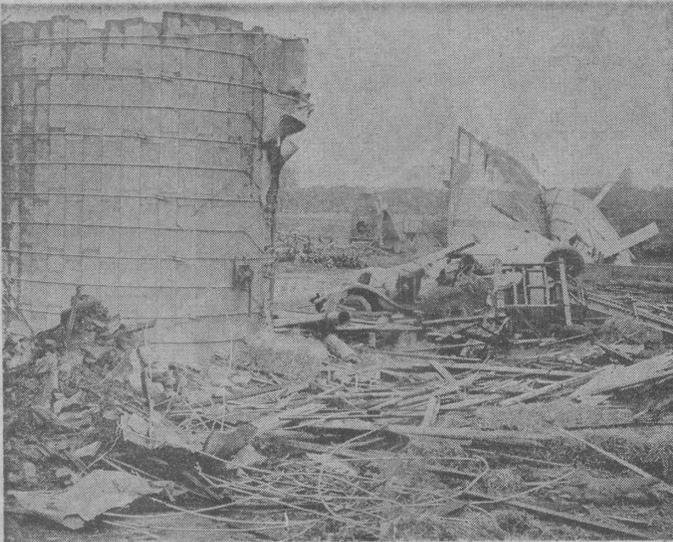
"I'm still numb," she said. Both Mr. and Mrs. Jaeger were born in the Charles City area. And they want to remain a part of it.

As the insurance adjuster said, the Jaegers were "lucky."

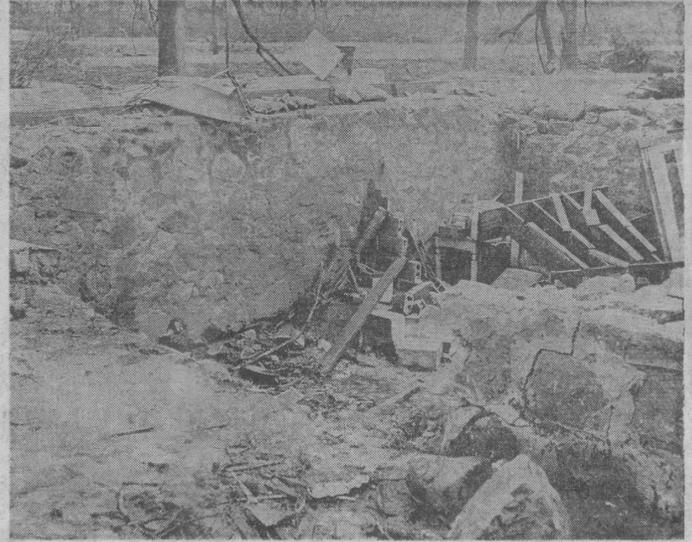
Their family miraculously survived the killer tornado that caused 13 deaths and millions of dollars worth of damage in Charles City, and to numerous other farms in the area.

But it was Linda Jaeger who seemed to sum up how the family felt about its incredible survival in the teeth of the tornado that demolished their farmstead.

"Others had it much, much worse," she said.



Part of a silo is left standing in the rubble of the farmstead.



The Jaegers and Lowell Head huddled in a corner of this basement.

"If they enter these buildings and a rock falls on their heads and they get killed, that's their responsibility, not the city's or the state's," said Robert Leber, state fire marshal, as his group was working at determining which downtown business buildings are safe to enter.

Roping has been placed in front of buildings at parking meters to keep pedestrians from using the sidewalks and the buildings have already been marked with Xs to show they are unsafe for persons

to be in.

"This is merely an inspection to determine conditions and is a public safety program," said Leber.

Twenty-five qualified state building inspectors from around Iowa, will begin inspection of residences.

A private company has offered a complete business district and commercial building survey by their structural engineers to determine if these

buildings are suitable for public habitation. "This is strictly a public safety survey," said Bill Bollinger, member of the Osage City staff and formerly with Charles Hansen Planning Consultants, Des Moines, who have been working in Charles City and Floyd County on planning programs.

Bollinger said the city council will have to make the decision whether to accept these services. Formal condemnation of buildings will be made

**ELMA** — Residents of the Elma vicinity are coming out of their first daze and shock and making plans for rebuilding. The families who lost homes have found places to live at least temporarily. Some are living in their basements, some are moving into homes that were empty and some are living with relatives.

All the trees have been sawed up and cleared away, and debris clean-up has progressed better than residents had hoped. They were helped by 500 men from Riceville, Cresco, New Hampton, and Saturday two busloads of Belmont high school students came to help. There was help for the telephone company from Toledo, Dyersville, and Cresco, and National Guard came from Waterloo, Mason City and Charles City.

The church women from Alta Vista and New Haven brought food and helped the Salvation Army and Red Cross serve meals.

There were five injured in the Elma vicinity. All have been released from the hospital except Mrs. Charles McGee who had been blown out of her farm home into the yard, and although no bones were broken was badly bruised and shaken. The others injured were Charles McGee, Mrs. Tom Smith and three-year-old son, Todd, Walter Fair, and Mrs. Aura Conroy.

The tornado came from Niles Corner and destroyed the Dale Hart, James McAvoy farms and Aura Conroy home. The Jim Gansen home was blown away. The Tom Smith home exploded. The tornado followed the creek to the Fensmore Brandmill farm where it blew down seven buildings, but left the house standing. Brandmill said a total of 100 oak trees had been blown down on his property. Mrs. John DeVries home received some damage.

The Immaculate Conception Church steeple was blown off and half the roof fell into the church. Services were held Sunday in the Immaculate Conception School gym. The school has broken windows but was not structurally damaged. School has resumed today.

A corn dryer from the Howard County Equity Assn. was blown to the middle of the railroad tracks. The Leo Jenn home was damaged, and the Fred Pierce Service Station.

In the northeast part of town, the Walter Fair house was wrecked and some pigs, 200 chickens and all the buildings are lost.

The home of Mrs. Nick Zeimetz was flattened. A widow, she has 17 children. Nine of the children were home when the tornado came through the Elma area about 5 p.m. The younger children had trouble awakening Francis, 22, the oldest of the family at home. All nine children managed to get into the basement, however, before the funnel flattened their home.

At the Ivan Schroeder farm all of his big machinery is gone, and all the buildings of both his farms. The houses of his two farms are repairable and he has already started repair work.

The farms of Charles McGee, Thomas Burke, Arnold Rimrodt, Jerome Fitzgerald were all badly damaged or flattened.

Thirteen barns between Elma and Highway 9 have been completely destroyed.

## No instrument to record tornado speed

"People always want to know the wind velocity," said Bill Smith, Charles City weatherman. "It is impossible to measure tornado winds because no instrument to date has been able to register it. The instruments get blown away. It has been estimated that a tornado wind is 600-700 miles per hour."

Smith said the American Meteorology Society booklet, "Weatherwise" describes a tor-

nado in 1966 at Topeka, Kan., as the greatest of any. It caused 17 deaths, 550 injuries and 250 families were affected. There were 800 dwellings receiving major damage and 400 receiving minor damage. Property damage was in excess of 100 million dollars. The path of the tornado was 800 miles long and four blocks wide. The date of this Kansas tornado was June 8, 1966.

Two decades ago, only 55 of the world's cities had population exceeding one million; today there are 120 such cities.



Sen. Jack Miller made a whirlwind tour of disaster-stricken Charles City Sunday afternoon and ended up by describing the situation as a "very big Belmont."

"I've seen tornado damage before," Sen. Miller commented, "but this is the worst I've ever seen."

The senator came into the city from Oelwein where he had driven from Des Moines. His schedule called for immediate return to Des Moines for a commitment Sunday night and total time spent in Charles City was approximately one hour.

### MEETING AT COURTHOUSE

Meeting with a group of disaster headquarters at the Court House, Sen. Miller explained work he and Sen. Burch Beh (R-Ind.) have been doing on a major disaster assistance bill which until recently has been confined to committee. "We patterned this after the Alaska earthquake," Miller commented, "and it's taken us three years to get it where it is now." The senator explained that just "two or three days before" the disaster hit Charles City the proposed bill was released from commit-

tee and he is planning to meet Sen. Everett Dirksen (R-Ill.) and Sen. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) to make arrangements to get "a higher priority" for the Miller-Beh bill.

### CRIME BILL

At present, according to Miller, the crime bill is taking precedent among senate activities and it is his desire to draw attention to the need for concern to be directed to the disaster bill at this time.

"Of course," he commented, "once the senate passes the bill, it still must go through the house," but he added that he believes there should be little problem if the senate gives the stamp of approval. "Both the senate and the house are receptive to the bill," Miller commented.

### HOUSING GRANTS

One of the primary benefits of the proposed legislation is grants for housing. "We're not talking of loans," Miller emphasized, "we're speaking of grants."

A reporter asked Miller about the procedures for stricken areas to receive federal financial assistance. "Well," explained Miller, "the first thing is to have the governor of the state declare the

area a disaster area, and I understand this has been done. Once this is accomplished then the wheels on the federal level will begin to turn."

### ASSISTANCE

The senator closed out the brief session by stating that if there is anything he can be of assistance with that local officials should not hesitate to call on him.

Following the brief gathering Miller was taken on a tour of the tornado's path by Police Chief John Gordon. Accompanying the senator were Jim Francis, Civil Defense Director from Mason City; Don Johnson, Director of the newly created Charles City Re-development Commission; Gary Darland, City Engineer, and Harry Brenton.

Throughout the tour Senator Miller commented on the situation and spoke from his auto to workers and other citizens: "Hi, Mrs. Binger," he said as the car slowly passed the wife of former police chief Kermit Binger. "Hi, good to see you," he said to several others who watched as the car progressed. Upon completing the trip Sen. Miller again emphasized his willingness to assist in the way and departed the city.

## Erroneous name among death lists

The official death list is at 13, said Floyd County Sheriff L. L. Lane Monday morning.

There has been much confusion regarding the listing of the death of a boy identified as Tom Hall or Tom Brown. A search of many morgues and hospitals has failed to reveal a death of a youth.

This apparently resulted from difficulty in identifying a body which was later identified as Robert Stott, student teacher from the University of Iowa. This is the body believed to have been the Hall or Brown youth.

A photo carried in the Charles City Press of a youth injured lying in the Villa store window was identified Sunday as Nick Schrup, by his father, Maurice Schrup, executive director of the Cedar Terrace housing development.

Schrup said he had not seen the newspaper and also had been to Rochester to see his son and reported he was coming along fine. Nick suffered a head injury when bricks from the Sherwin - Williams Paint store toppled from the top of the two-story building.

In addition, the Schrup boy does have a friend by the name of Tom Brown, who was with him at the time the bricks fell, however Brown was uninjured.

The known dead are Murray Loomer, Mrs. Raymond Chambers, Harry Hall, Arthur Jacobs, August Merten, Mrs. James Gault, Mrs. Carl Wolff, Mrs. Leland Leach, Marie Greenlees, Mr. and Mrs. John Kneisel, Robert Stott and Mrs. Virval Dawson.

## No Fatalities

# Elma, Neighboring Area Severely Hit

By HARRY GUNDAKER  
Courier Correspondent

ELMA — Scenes of chaos marked Elma and neighboring areas Thursday in the wake of a tornado accompanied by a severe hail storm that wreaked an estimated \$1 to \$1.5 million damage Wednesday.

Two Elma women, Mrs. Thomas Smith and Mrs. Ora Conroy, were hospitalized in New Hampton Thursday with injuries from the storm. Numerous other persons were treated Wednesday at the New Hampton hospital and released.

The Smith and Conroy homes were two of those completely destroyed. Other homes completely destroyed included those of James Gansen and Mrs. Margaret McAvoy.

### Roads Blocked

Roads into Elma were officially blocked Thursday to keep out sightseers.

Within town in an area about four by six blocks on the west side, virtually every tree was either stripped of branches or downed. Many streets were blocked by the trees.

Scarcely a home or building in the area escaped damage.

Downed power lines in the streets created additional hazards through the town.

No telephone service into Elma existed Thursday, but some telephone service within town had been restored by 10 p.m. Wednesday.

### Power Out

Power also was completely out Thursday, but Mayor Clarence Turnis said some

auxiliary power might be available by Thursday afternoon.

Mayor Turnis also expressed concern about possible contamination of the water supply.

The cluster of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church buildings, including church, school and parsonage, was extensively damaged. The entire church roof was removed some two blocks down the street by the winds.

Other buildings severely damaged included the Howard County garage and a corn-drying plant.

The storm appears to have struck this southern Howard County town of about 700 persons about 5:30 p.m. Wednesday. Mrs. Gerald Fogarty said she saw the funnel approach and dip down about then as she returned to Elma from a shopping trip.

An unidentified woman insisted she saw three funnels converging on the town.

### Farms Hit

The storm also inflicted heavy damage in an area about six miles in both directions southwest and northeast of Elma. Farms especially hard hit in the area included those of Mrs. Ludwina Zimet, Charles McGee, Ed O'Brien, Earl Kelly, Larry Vovits, Don Fairchild and Walter Fair.

Witnesses in the country said the storm was accompanied by heavy hail which added its own severe destruction.

Neighboring communities sending help to Elma ranged

as far as Austin, Minn., about 50 miles away.

St. Joseph's Community Hospital at New Hampton was a receiving station for storm victims from both Charles City and Elma and was reported completely filled with patients in the halls Thursday. Officials contemplated turning the parochial school into an emergency ward but had not needed to resort to that measure Thursday.

Condition reports from the New Hampton hospital were unavailable Thursday because records were incomplete. Officials said they were still trying to identify the home areas of some of the patients.

## Belmond Mayor Says Faith Will Rebuild Towns

BELMOND (AP) — The former mayor of Belmond, which was ravaged by a tornado 19 months ago, says Charles City and Oelwein can be rebuilt if their residents keep the faith.

"People will be vomiting and walking around with glassy eyes for two days," said Dr. Robert Misner. "Those two days are the toughest any town can have."

"But no matter how hopeless it looks, no matter the human hurt, they can whip it. Right now, their first job is to keep faith with each other and in God; then start digging people out. Help's on the way."

Six people were killed and 172 were injured in the Oct. 14, 1966, Belmond tornado. Most of the town has been rebuilt.

## Little Warning Before Tornado Struck Oelwein

By DAVE BROWN  
Courier Staff Writer

OELWEIN — There was little warning Wednesday afternoon when the tornado came down on Oelwein.

Mike Mahoney, managing editor of the Oelwein Daily Register, may have been one of the first to see it.

"It hit Lake Oelwein first," Mahoney said. "The trailer court there is all gone."

"The people downtown couldn't have seen it," Mahoney was golfing at the Elks Country Club course southwest of the city at 4:57 p.m. He saw the funnel.

"It came right down out of the sky," Mahoney said.

Seconds later, as the massive funnel ripped a swath through Oelwein, Fireman Wallace Rundle rushed out of the fire station in city hall when he heard people shouting, "Tornado! Tornado!"

### Pushed Siren

"When I saw the funnel I ran as fast as I could inside," Rundle said, "and pushed the siren button."

The Oelwein siren is used to notify volunteer firemen of an alarm. It can be heard throughout the city. But Wednesday afternoon, there was not enough time.

"It went about 15 seconds," Rundle said, "before the electricity went off. I couldn't give them the full five minutes, but I did the best I could."

"Then all Hell broke loose!" Rundle and LaVern Wolfram, the other fireman on duty, rounded up all the city hall employees, who were to get off work in three minutes, and rushed them to the basement of the city hall as the building caved in around them.

"They were pretty panicky," Rundle said. "Some of them were screaming."

### Calmed Employees

Rundle and Wolfram calmed the city employees, then, when the storm had passed, they emerged from the wrecked city hall.

Rundle drove the Oelwein firetrucks out of the station.

Then they got a rescue call

to the Ben Franklin Store, where Mrs. Grace Damon was pinned underneath a fallen chimney.

Mrs. Damon, who had moved into the apartment over the store only two days previously, had been forced through the floor of her apartment, and hung half in her apartment and half through the ceiling.

### Died at Hospital

Several men worked for nearly an hour to free her. She died at Mercy Hospital.

A volunteer at the hospital took her husband, "Chick," to the Brant Funeral Home. Damon, unshaven and unsteady, seemed dazed.

"If I could of got home I would of taken care of it," he mumbled to a nurse.

Mrs. Richard Peshek, of 151 1st Ave. N.E., across from the city hall, said her husband was looking out of an upstairs window at their residence when "he saw the clouds going every which way," and saw "a man running down the street."

### Escape Injury

They ran downstairs, and escaped injury.

"Our bedroom is kind of smashed," Mrs. Peshek said as she sat outside next door to her ruined apartment.

"I don't know what I'll do for clothes."

Jere Vyverberg, son of Oelwein Sacred Heart high School basketball coach "Hap" Vyverberg, and a crew of his friends, nailed plywood over the broken windows of his father's sporting goods store near city hall.

He sported a gauze-wrapped forearm, injured when a door blown off of the Earl Morris Hardware store, struck him. His parents were in Chicago.

"The wind blew," Vyverberg said, "and some woman fell right on top of me. I don't even know who she was."

## Suggestions for lighting

You'll need light for many extra hours of clean-up work, but be sure it's safe and efficient light says Phyllis Seymour, extension home economist. Don't plug anything into a circuit until your house's wiring has been approved for safe use.

Here's what you can do to get your lights conditioned. Disconnect all portable lamps and take out the light bulbs. Clean out moisture and sediment from the socket. Clean bulbs with a damp cloth before putting them back. Use a cloth wrung out in warm sudsy water to wash lamp bases, cords and plugs. Examine cords for possible cuts or breaks. Repair or replace before plugging into an outlet.

Before cleaning ceiling fixtures, turn off the house's electricity at the main switch. Remove bulbs, clean and dry the socket openings. Clean all bulbs and shades of light fixtures before you replace them. This will give you the most efficient use of your light for clean-up work, says Phyllis Seymour.

In using trouble lights, examine the cord to be sure there's no break. Clean and dry the socket in the same way as for a portable lamp. As you extend the use of the cord to wide areas from the convenience outlet, keep it high and dry. Avoid letting it run along wet or damp surfaces or over broken glass.

For your own safety, wear rubber gloves when you disconnect or re-connect any electrical appliance and stand on a rubber mat when you replace fuses in your service box.

## Temporary business sites being sought

Merchants whose place of business have been destroyed or are unsafe, who desire to re-enter business quickly, are advised that every effort is being made to provide temporary business sites.

The city began Saturday to clean Central Park of debris where sites will be made available for temporary business operation.

Businessmen should determine what their minimum square footage requirements will be then contact Don Johnson at the Urban Renewal office or Doug Drown at the Chamber of Commerce.



#7

# How to Watch for a Tornado

**F**OR TORNADO detection, you can use your TV set, supplemented by a battery-operated transistor radio. It's a method developed by Newton Weller, a West Des Moines electronics engineer, and put to a successful test in the Orange City tornado last fall.

Heres' what you do:

**1** Let your TV set warm up and turn it first to Channel 13.

**2** Using the brightness control knob, darken the screen below normal brightness but not to the completely-black point.

**3** Then, turn to Channel 2 and leave the set alone. (It's important to use this procedure in turning the channels.)

If the entire screen lights up with a steady, bright white light, a tornado is on the way. Take shelter.

As long as the screen remains essentially dark, the storm is not a tornado. Bright horizontal streaks or flashes—even when they're frequent—are **aren't anything** to worry about. They're lightning flashes.

Look for the **STEADY** brightness.

**B**ECAUSE power lines can go down in a tornado's wake, you'll want to augment your TV warning system with the battery-operated transistor. Do this:

**1** Set the radio alongside the TV set.

**2** Turn your radio dial all the way to the **LEFT**.

When the radio makes a steady, staccato noise, take shelter.

Lightning makes a sharp crack on the radio.

*Why does this system work?*  
Weller says it's because a tornado funnel acts much like a huge vacuum tube. Like a gigantic pulse gen-

erator, it sends out electronic signals that can be picked up on a TV set or radio as described above.

If you want to feel additionally safe, use another radio or TV to listen for the Weather Bureau's warnings.

Another word of caution: *Don't get so carried away with watching or listening THAT YOU FORGET TO TAKE SHELTER when the screen turns steady, bright white and the radio gives a steady, staccato message.*

The method apparently had a hypnotic effect on some Orange City residents who did just that. Luckily, they escaped with their lives.

## New Hampton hospital alerted by phone call

**NEW HAMPTON**—A telephone call from an unidentified person alerted St. Joseph's Community Hospital that a disaster had struck Charles City. "Charles City needs all the medical help they can get," was the message at 5:35 p. m. At 5:40 p. m. two badly injured men entered the hospital on foot and told personnel that Charles City had been destroyed by a tornado.

Sister Sebastian, hospital administrator, said the New Hampton Community "Disaster Program" was put into operation immediately. There were volunteer nurses, office helpers, Grey ladies, Candy Strippers, Hospital Auxiliary Women and scores of individuals on hand soon to give assistance besides the regular hospital personnel.

A total of 56 persons were treated in St. Joseph's Community Hospital emergency room from 5:40 p. m. Wednesday until 12:30 a. m. Of these, 22 victims of the tornado were admitted and 34 were treated and released.

They were brought to the hospital by ambulance, private cars, station wagons and panel trucks.

During these hours five

other patients were admitted who had not been involved in the tornado.

Seven or eight persons treated at the emergency room were transferred to St. Joseph's gym and stayed there until they had transportation back to Charles City or to homes of relatives or friends.

St. Joseph's School was set up as a first aid center and 40 beds were available there. The beds, bedding, blankets and equipment were donations from persons in the area. Great Plains Supply sent panel boards to the hospital to use as carts or stretchers.

Sister Sebastian said that most of the injuries treated were lacerations and broken bones. Wounds had sand and dirt imbedded which took longer to clean than usual cuts and lacerations.



Damage to First Presbyterian Church

A steady stream of injured poured into the hospital here. Many were given emergency treatment and then taken by ambulance to hospitals at Osage, Hampton, New Hampton, Mason City and Rochester, Minn.

Johnson said Thursday that 31 storm victims were hospitalized here. Among them was Julie Groesbeck, a 17-year-old high school senior, who narrowly escaped death.

Miss Groesbeck, a 125-pound, blue-eyed brunette, was on her way to pick up her mother at the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service office when she saw "all the lights go off—the street lights, traffic, buildings, everything."

#### Flying Debris

"I was near the corner of the Brantingham Bridge (the new \$80,000 span received heavy damage) and I looked to the south and saw all the wood splinters, dust and debris flying through the air.

"I pulled into a service station and parked the car between two other cars. I jumped out of the car and threw myself down in front of the car, face down.

"I peeked up and saw the cars moving over the top of me, spinning around. I was moving with them.

"I ended up under the cars, facing the opposite way. My car was picked up and rolled across the street. It landed upside down and smashed.

"I started crawling out from beneath the wrecked cars and I saw a live wire throwing sparks about 10 feet away.

"My ears were ringing real loud because of the noise.

#### Shoes Gone

"My shoes were gone. My nylons were shredded. My dress was black with dirt and mud. I got up and yelled for help. I saw a man. He was in a daze.

"I went toward the Trowbridge shopping center across the street and another man walked up to me and helped me.

"There was broken glass all around. I got an apron from a clerk and wrapped it around myself."

Miss Groesbeck received hundreds of tiny wounds on her legs "from flying dirt and sand." The dirt and sand hit with such force the particles were embedded in her legs.

Her legs are covered with hundreds of tiny red welts. She

also had a cut on her foot and leg.

#### Feared Death

From her hospital bed, Miss Roesebeck said:

"When those cars spun over me I thought I was going to die.

"It was only seconds but it seemed like a lifetime.

"When I finally got to my feet, I felt terrible. I looked around and thought everyone was gone but me. I didn't recognize anything.

"But, a funny thing—I had my contact lenses on and they didn't even blow out."

#### Graduates in June

By June 5, her scheduled high school graduation day, Miss Groesbeck hopes her legs will have recovered.

Mrs. Myrtle Shapley, 51, of Greene, hospitalized here with a broken right leg, was in Gibson's discount store on Main street "when everything came right down on top of me."

"Someone said something about a funnel and the next thing everything started flying," Mrs. Shapley said. "I ran toward the back, but didn't make it.

"Everything came down on me—plaster and stuff off the shelves. A girl who works at the store also was knocked down.

"I was buried under rubbish. My right leg was twisted and pinned and I couldn't get out. I worried that no one would find us. It was hard to breathe. I started to yell for help.

"Seemed like ages before someone answered. I talked to them [rescuers] for some time before I ever saw them.

#### "Hissing Sound"

"I could hear a hissing sound. It must have been a can of hair spray that went off. It got on my nerves a little. I could smell it. I feel fortunate they found me. I thought they never would."

Mrs. Leola Eckwall of Greene, sister of Mrs. Shapley, was in the store at the same time but made it out the back way before the building caved in.

Mrs. Shapley had purchased a pair of slacks and shirt as a gift for a niece. "The gift's still there," she said. "All wrapped. They'll never find it."

There were almost as many witness stories as there are residents in this city of 10,419.

LaVerne Clapp, 65, and his 59-year-old wife had their home at

1708 Missouri st. in the north part of town blown right off "the top of our heads."

#### Terrible Roar

"I always kept a table in a corner in the basement for emergencies like this," said Mrs. Clapp. "We went down and got under the table. There was a terrible roar.

"Then it was hard to breathe. Like it was dead air. We could look up and see the sky. Three walls — that's all that's left. Car smashed, too."

The Clapp's dog, a chihuahua named "P.T.," hid under a bed and wasn't harmed.

A son-in-law and a daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Bradshaw, both 40, lived a block west of the Clapps.

Mrs. Bradshaw said her husband "saw it coming and we went into a corner in the base-

ment and he threw himself over me to protect me."

#### "Everything Was Gone"

"You could feel the vacuum," Bradshaw said. "I tried to open a window, but couldn't. I looked up and everything was gone. You could hear the sounds of boards snapping loose."

The Bradshaws moved into their new 2-bedroom home Jan. 20, 1967. Their two daughters were not at home and were not injured.

"Our neighbor lady, Mrs. Leland Leech, died on the way to the hospital at Waverly" said Mrs. Bradshaw.

After the storm hit, the eerie darkness was punctuated by an occasional glow of an emergency light. It was desolate and grim.

The stream of persons into

#### CHARLES CITY —

Continued on Page Eleven

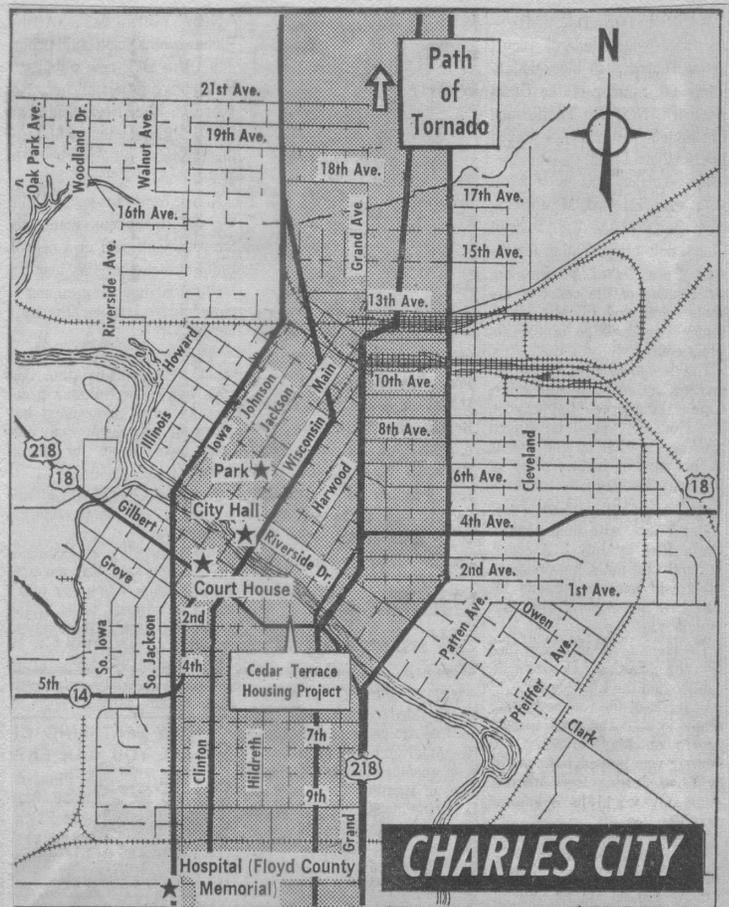
## No one hurt at YMCA

YMCA Program Director Lee Skavanger told a Press reporter Monday that approximately 20 youngsters were in the Y at the time the tornado struck Charles City but no injuries were involved and all came away unscratched.

Skavanger stated that classes were being conducted at the time in both the gymnasium and swimming pool. He and Mrs. Jack Frye rounded up the children and directed them to the basement before the tornado struck and virtually gutted the building.

Skavanger explained there were "about four or five residents of the St. Charles Hotel in their rooms but they all came out okay. One was pretty badly cut up but he is alright as far as I know now."

YMCA Director Dick Welch was in Mexico City, Mexico at the time along with Leo Lidd and Leo Schula. The trio were attending a Rotary International convention.



## CHARLES CITY ---

Continued from Page One

tornado-torn Oelwein area earlier.

"Is it a disaster area?" Hughes said in answer to a question. "Hell, all you've got to do is look down the streets."

The governor said he "didn't bring a truckload of money along" but said the National Guard troops and state highway patrolmen were on hand to help in great numbers.

"After the basic clean-up is completed in a couple of days," Hughes indicated, a disaster program of some kind will be initiated.

### Points to Warning

Hughes said that in "an area such as Iowa where we have as many tornadoes as we do, anything we do to give advance warning — even if it's only 60 seconds — might make a big difference."

Charles City has no disaster siren. Residents had to rely on commercial radio and television stations for warnings of the approaching storm.

Mayor Brenton, 70, said the fire siren was not sounded because "many would have run outside to see where the fire was and it would have been worse."

Brenton said the swath cut by the tornado was about 8 blocks wide and 1½ miles long. He said two of the dead lived in the \$1,180,000 federally financed Cedar Terrace housing project, which opened in April.

The 82 apartments in the low-rent project were flattened. Eighty units were occupied, mainly by elderly. The units have no basements, so those who knew about the approaching storm had no place to go.

### "Terrible Moments"

Mrs. Anna Schilling, 62, a widow, lived in a \$40-a-month unit in the housing project.

As she poked through the rubble Thursday, Mrs. Schilling recalled "those terrible moments." Her clock stopped at 4:48 p.m.

"I just sat down to supper," she said. "The wind started in. First thing I knew I was under the table and hanging onto the window sill for dear life. I don't know how I got there."

"The windows blew in. Something hit my leg. I just stayed under the table."

"Everything blew up, glass was flying all around. I hurt all over. I never saw anything like

this. Then I got up and couldn't get the door because rubbish was against it.

"I heard the woman across the street—Mrs. Ben (Katie) Champion, 84—yelling for help. She cried, 'Anna, Anna. Help me. I can't get out.'

### "Poor Soul"

"Two men moved the debris from the door and we went over to help Mrs. Champion. Poor soul. She's an invalid.

"I never did finish my supper. I'm worried about my stuff. Nothing left. I don't have insurance or anything."

In the rubble was Mrs. Schilling's supper plate with cooked ground beef still on it.

She has a daughter, Mrs. Max Britt of Granger, and two sons, Art, 23, of Charles City and Theodore Hagelee of Alton, Ill. She plans to stay with her son here.

The tornado left a path of debris that looked as if a ber-

serk bowling ball had plowed into a bunch of toothpicks.

### Saw 3 Funnels

James Johnson, administrator for Floyd County Memorial Hospital on the south edge of the city, saw "three funnels coming from the south and west about 4:30 p.m."

The funnels "looked like they were going to merge," Johnson said.

"It was heading right for the hospital, but apparently skipped over the building."

The television antenna atop the hospital was twisted and bent. In the hospital's front yard, boards and debris were strewn.

Right north of the hospital the big 3-in-one funnel touched down and uprooted trees, smashed several cars and snapped power lines.

### Only One Doctor

"In 15 minutes there was a Red Cross official at the hospi-

tal," Johnson said. "For the first hour we had only one doctor here.

"The rest of the staff of 25 couldn't get here because the bridge was blocked."

You could trace the tornado's progress by the times the clocks stopped.

A Charles City radio newsman reported to his listeners tornadoes that had been reported in the Dumont, Green and Harcourt areas about 4 p.m., at Aredale about 4:10 p.m. and on the edge of Charles City at 4:30 p.m.

### Then, Charles City

The clock in the office of Floyd County Sheriff Floyd Lane's office in the Courthouse stopped at 4:54 p.m., the clock at the Northwestern Bell Telephone Co., about six blocks north stopped at 4:51 p.m.

The telephone building received about \$50,000 in damage but some long distance lines

were in service soon after the storm.



Efforts were in vain to save the life of Tom Hall, 16, who was injured when the wall from Sherwin-Williams Paint Co. fell on him. Volunteers placed him in window of The Villa clothing store. He died later at the Osage hospital.

CHARLES CITY PRESS Charles City, Iowa Wed., May 29, 1968 7



RESTING WEARILY on a post at the corner of Clark and Highway 18, acting fire chief Allen Steffler watches burning debris. Persons who have had total loss of their homes may have the remains burned by applying at their ward offices and if it meets the approval of the fire department.

## Radio vigil maintained with aid of volunteers

Residents throughout Charles City and Floyd County affected by last week's tornado were kept well abreast of developments through the facilities of KCHA. Vern Bromberg, station manager told a Press reporter Monday afternoon that a total of 28 persons volunteered service during the crucial days following the storm to keep urgent messages and information flowing.

"I can't express my appreciation enough," Bromberg said, "to these people for the remarkable job they did. It's difficult to name them all right now and I know there will be some I omit, but we had typists, announcers, citizens band operators and information gatherers that did a tremendous job."

Some of the local persons Bromberg mentioned were Ron Phillips, Bill Happle, Brian Ross, Terry Brazeel, Bob Monroe, Mrs. Rosemary Osier, Donna Sullivan and Elaine Cross. Dick Snider, a former employe of KCHA now with a radio station at Fort Dodge also came into town and sat mikeside for a number of hours Saturday. In addition Bromberg stated that his daughter Pam and son Barry worked throughout the entire period. Pam, a sophomore at University of Iowa, returned home Wednesday night and assisted in the office work and typing.

An interesting sidelight to the activities of KCHA during the disaster broadcasting was the fact that Program Director Jim Barker managed to complete long planned wedding ceremonies with Carol Page. The couple were married at Rudd Saturday afternoon but Jim worked right up to noon Saturday broadcasting news and information.

Bromberg explained that the final radio warning before the

storm was issued by him following a call from Mrs. George Scrimgeour, 227 Charles St. Mrs. Scrimgeour advised the station that a tornado was sighted west of Charles St. and Bromberg immediately passed along the information over the air. Within seconds, the wind began to rise and the last transmitted words were those of News Director John Philip who exclaimed, "My God, it's here!"

Bromberg stated that the entire staff dashed to the basement to seek safety in a vault located there. (The building at one time had been occupied by Commercial Trust and Savings Bank.) As he passed the back door, Bromberg yanked it open and he attributed the light damage to the station to that action.

"You know, you always hear that you should open windows and doors if you have time so that pressure can be somewhat equalized," Bromberg observed. "Well, that thought ran through my mind so I yanked the door open before running downstairs and I really think that helped keep the damage down." He explained the front door was open because of the heat and humidity of Wednesday afternoon.

Damage to the downtown facilities of KCHA were "limited, compared to some of the other stores." Bromberg stated that some roof damage has been detected as well as minor equipment damage. The front window of the station was blown out. Broadcasting operations were returned to the station Monday afternoon.

The station had gone off the air just prior to the tornado's strike but with an emergency power supply began broadcasting at 7:40 p.m. Wednesday evening. They remained on the air throughout the night and until regular signoff time the following evening at 8:30.

Broadcasting operations were conducted at the transmitter site on Stoney Point Road. Emergency power was supplied by a unit donated by

Dick Tector with an output of 180-200 watts; less than half of needed wattage. At 1:30 Thursday morning Iowa Public Service Co. had provided an emergency line and the emergency equipment was released.

Bromberg commended the disaster workers for their efforts. "No matter what we asked for (meaning for disaster victims or assistance) we immediately received and in most cases more than enough. It sounds corny, but it was like the open hand of God. Everybody responded tremendously."

Bromberg also expressed thanks to persons, many of whom failed to identify themselves, for bringing in food and beverages to the personnel over and above that which was brought in by the disaster teams.

## Benefit dance at Clear Lake

CLEAR LAKE — A benefit dance for the tornado victims of Charles City has been scheduled for Saturday night, May 25, at the Surf Ballroom here. The dance is being sponsored by the Clear Lake community, and all North Iowans are invited.

All door proceeds from the dance, featuring the country-western music of "Bill Henning and the Country Blue Boys" will go to the Charles City Disaster Fund. Admission will be \$1 per person.

Dancing will be from 9 to 1 p. m. Tickets are available at local banks and will be available at the Surf Saturday night.

## MAKE DONATION

NASHUA — The Nashua Trail Riders voted to donate \$40 for food and \$50 cash to the Salvation Army at Charles City at their meeting Sunday. Many of the members have donated their trucks and services to Charles City since the disaster.



Fury of tornado left scenes of complete ruin. Lower part of this two-story house was pulled from beneath and now it's a one-story house.

CHARLES CITY PRESS Charles City, Iowa Mon., May 20, 1963



MAYOR HARRY BRENTON brings Sen. Jack Miller up to the minute on details of recovery operations which have taken place since the time of last Wednesday's tornado. Sen. Miller advised the Mayor to keep him posted if any needs arise that the senator may be helpful with.



REGISTER PHOTO BY GEORGE CEOLLA

## Portrait of a Survivor

Mrs. Anna Schilling, 62, of Charles City clutches her hands as if in prayer Thursday as she recalls how her residence was leveled by Wednesday's tornado. Mrs. Schilling had an apartment in the recently opened 82-unit, \$1,180,000 Cedar Terrace housing project

for the elderly. The widow said she had just sat down to supper when the wind started. "First thing I knew I was under the table and hanging onto the window sill. Everything blew up. . . . I hurt all over . . ." she said. She escaped without injury.

# Council approves concept of plan for reconstruction

set up a temporary office in Charles City until the immediate period is completed. Don Johnson was directed to contact the commissioner's office this morning to issue the request.

In addition, a citizens group tentatively comprised of Herman Nelson, Don Semelhack and Mrs. Larry Manship was formed to tend to local discrepancies.

City clerk Helen Webster told the council that following a survey by the Howard Green Engineering firm of Cedar Rapids, an estimated \$312,641 in damages were compiled for city properties not including all water and sewer lines. The

estimated total accounted for only streets, sidewalks, traffic signals, curbs and gutters and other related items. It was Mrs. Webster's suggestion that

a resolution be passed requesting Gov. Hughes to provide state financial aid for immediate attention to these needed

The city council last night met in special session and voted unanimously among those present to hire Leo J. Shapiro and Assoc. to prepare a preliminary plan for the reconstruction of Charles City.

A concept of a plan, presented to the council Wednesday night, generally calls for rebuilding of the area in the storm's path from the southern corporate line through the northern sector of the city. The central business district would be rebuilt around existing useable structures, but would be concentrated between Jackson and Brantingham Sts. with the river being a focal point of the area.

A meeting is being held today to determine school board needs and park board desires to incorporate such plans into a more comprehensive proposal which will be brought to the council within the next ten days.

Charles Hansen, planning consultant who has worked with the city for the past four years preparing a comprehensive city-zoning program was also given the nod to lend his services to those of Shapiro's staff.

The preliminary concept around which planning for the city will probably evolve is on display at the assembly room of the court house. Mayor Brenton along with members of the city council have urged that residents be completely informed of all developments and all are encouraged to observe what sketches have been proposed for possible use.

In other business, a group of residents were present to register dissatisfaction with insurance procedures surrounding the settlement for their damaged property. The crux of their displeasure centered in the fact that the insurance firm would not provide in a manner desired the necessary funds to rent temporary housing until a new home can be constructed.

### INSURANCE

After a brief discussion and explanation, Councilman Roy Ritter drew another unanimous vote from the council by moving to request that the state insurance commissioner

facilities. The resolution sped through the council and while the money, if loaned, will have to be repaid it is much needed at this time. Repayment may be assisted if the area is declared a major disaster.

Provision for the loan, as explained by State Rep. Ralph McCartney comes under Senate File 796 and calls for the levy of one mill against assessed valuations for emergency financial aid.



Demolition of buildings and portions of buildings began Thursday in efforts to prevent further injury from falling parts. Workers removed the decorative portion over the Crimson and Gold Book Store on Main St.





Death of Arthur Jacobs occurred in this area of the Jacobs Elevator. His body was found near the tractor. This was the office portion of the firm.



Removal of two victims of Charles City's tornado took place within minutes after the twister. Two bodies were found in wreckage of a unit at the east side of the Cedar Terrace elderly housing project.



**THERE'S STILL SPIRIT** in Charles City. The American flag flies from the top of the demolished home of Mrs. Emma Krinkie, at 1610 Missouri.

