

Lititz area barn destroyed by high winds

Sunday's brief violent wind storm raced through the John Reiff farm on Mountain Road in Penn Township, causing an entire side and the second floor of a stone barn to collapse, killing four cows and injuring another out of a herd of 44 cattle inside the barn.

Neighboring farmers were on hand Monday and Tuesday clearing away the debris from the fallen wall and rebuilding the side of the barn. About 100 men and boys turned out at various periods throughout the two days to help the Reiffs, some accompanied by wives and daughters who helped prepare huge quantities of food and drink for the work crew.

Reiff, who has been farming in this area for many years, said that he and his wife noticed the dark skies to the northwest about 1 p.m. on Sunday, and within seconds the water in a small pond behind the house was being whipped into four and five foot waves. While they watched the pond, they saw the side of the barn facing the house crumble into a huge cloud of dust. It all happened within seconds, Reiff said.

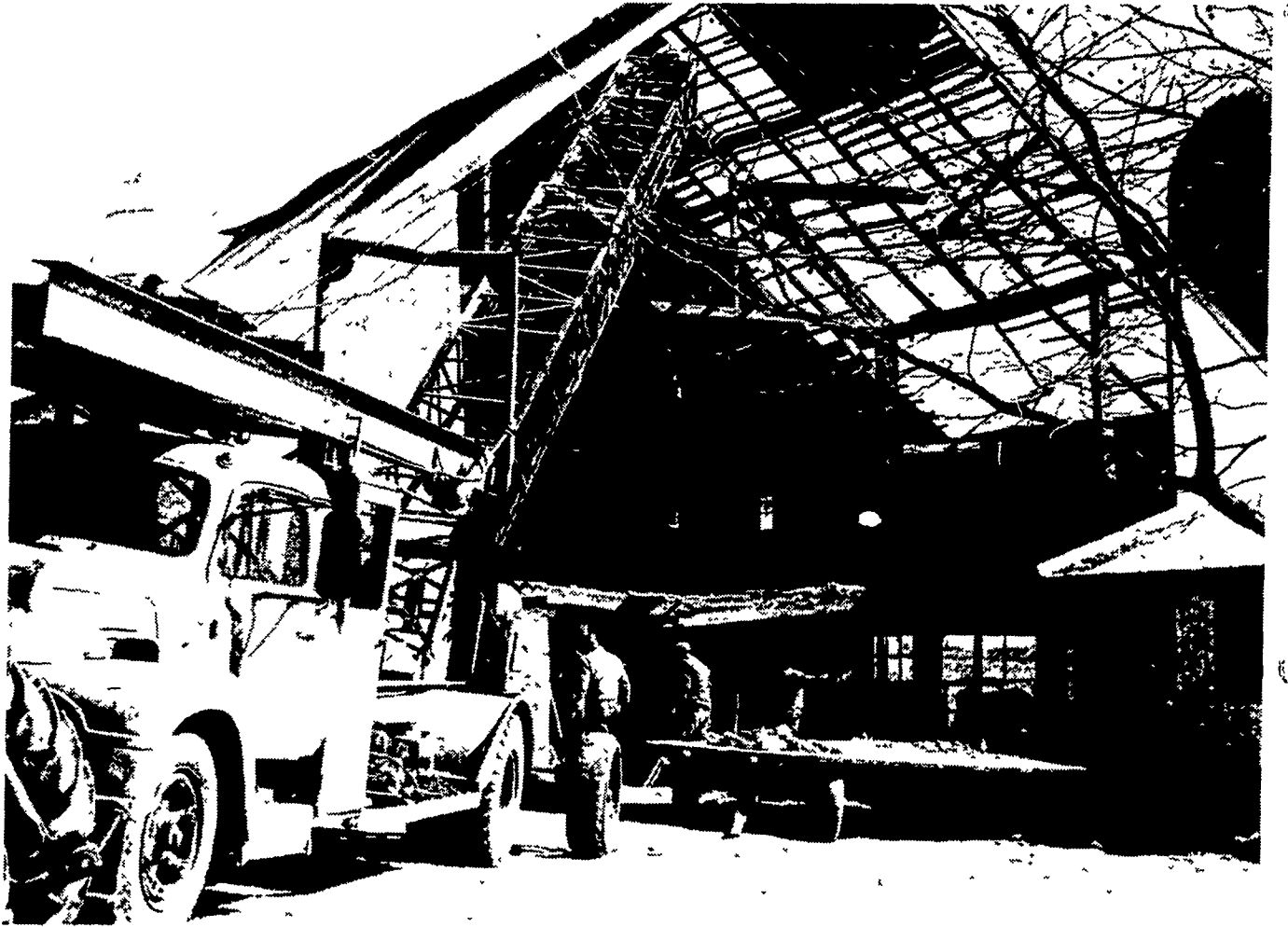
What happened, he explained, was that the wind sucked two large stones out of the side of the barn, and this in turn caused the rest of the wall to fall. A large part of the roof was also torn off, leaving bare timbers. The second floor collapsed after the stones were torn out, falling onto the cattle housed on the ground floor. Two cows were killed instantly, Reiff said, and two others died later in the day. A fifth cow seemed to be recovering, but it was being watched closely.

The Penryn Fire Company, of which Reiff is a member, was called later Sunday to help uncover the cows from the stones and other debris that fell on them.

Neither the Reiff's house nor any other buildings on the farm were reported damaged by the storm. The wind, which some describe as a small twister, moved in from the northwest, and apparently traveled across the pond toward the barn, missing the Reiff's house by only a few yards.

Facing the wind-struck side of the barn, and looking inside where the wall used to stand, one can see untouched bales of hay still in place on the undamaged portion of the second floor.

Surveying the damage area, Reiff noted that had the storm occurred later, closer to 5 p.m., it would have caught him and his family inside the barn doing the milking.



John Reiff (right) and neighbors clear stone and other debris out of barn on Reiff's farm on Mountain Road in Penn Township after Sunday's violent wind storm knocked in the side of the barn

and ripped off part of the roof. Four cows were killed and another injured when the wall and the second floor of the barn fell on them. No persons were in the barn at the time.

Conservation publication available

A popular U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service

publication has been reprinted. Continuing requests have led to a new printing of the bulletin, "Conquest of the Land Through 7,000 Years."

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