

A Saturday storm--destruction & helping hands

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN SCHOENECK — Wet, curled and discolored, it lay in a cornfield along Spook Lane in northern Lancaster County.

Quite small among the waist-high plants, it could easily have been missed. But the much larger pieces of



A piece of tin roofing lies in the middle of a cornfield hundreds of yards from where it was torn from a barn. In background is another building damaged on Melvin Nolt farm.



The Melvin Nolt farm was also the center of a large baking and cooking operation. A mountain of food was brought to the farm as hundreds of volunteers from the Nolt and Martin cleanup efforts were fed.



Clay Township bordered by Hackman, Indiantown, Durlach and Pleasant View Roads.

Two farms owned by Reuben Weaver, R1 Ephrata, in the area of the Pennfield plant along Schoeneck Road received heavy damages.

The storm apparently entered the normal peaceful, pastoral countryside in the area of Agway along Rt. 322 and cut a wide swath of destruction in a northeasterly direction.

On one farm, a 160-foot tobacco shed, one of the largest in the county, was

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debris scattered throughout the field seemed to call attention to it.

It's a letter dated March 15, 1940 from the McCormick-Deering Store in Ephrata addressed to Mr. Ezra Martin. The text of the letter extols the virtues of mechanical milkers and explains how sixty 10-hour days can be saved a year by switching from hand milking 10 cows to the modern mechanical process.

The back of the letter was used by Martin as an informal ledger to keep track of his chick expenses on March 21, 1940. Among the

items are \$40.00 for 300 chicks, 85 cents for coal oil and 90 cents for cobs.

By itself, this four-decade-old letter amidst a muddy, rain-soaked cornfield seems quite inconsequential. But surrounded by pieces of barn roof, farmhouse spouting and even scraps of wallpaper, it represents an important aftermath of the fast, vicious storm that swept across northern Lancaster County last Saturday causing damages in the millions.

The letter came from either the barn or farmhouse owned by Ezra Martin and

occupied by the family of his son, Gerald. Both were severely damaged, stripped of their roofs, much the way an opener peels off the top of a can.

Within walking distance, the storm also unleashed similar fury against the neighboring farm of Melvin H. Nolt. A barn was destroyed, along with 36 steers that died in an ensuing fire, as well as additional damages to the 1764 house and other buildings.

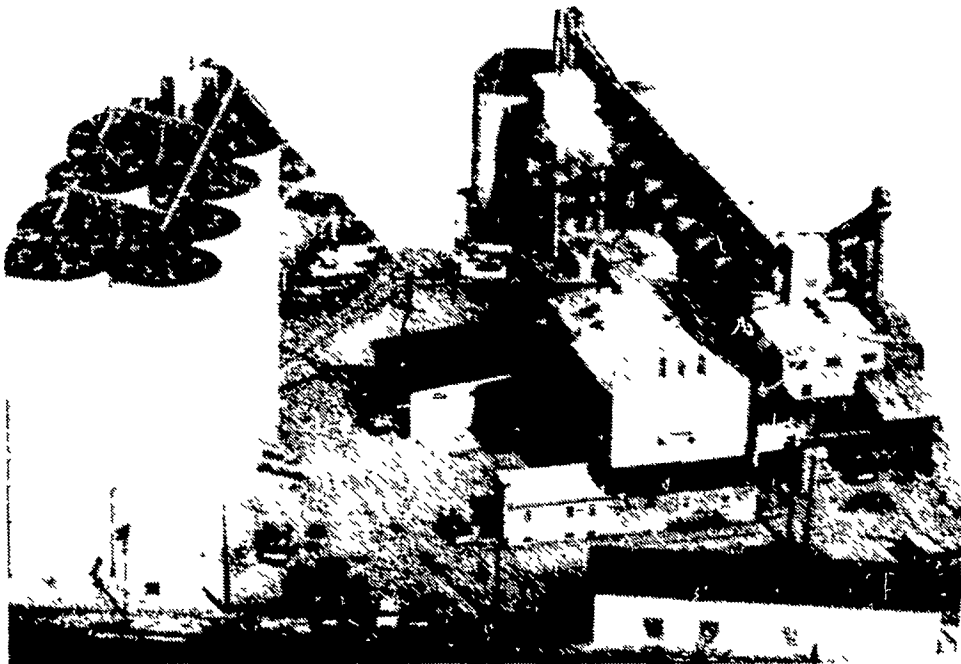
In all, about a score of major buildings were destroyed or severely damaged in the section of

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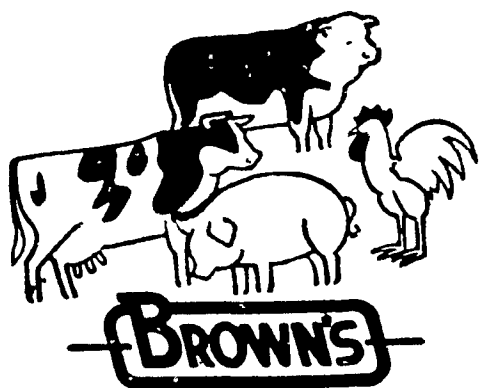


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