

4-26-74

Members of the college community,

I will greatly appreciate it if you will take time before details slip away to write down what you (and your family) were doing at 3:51 p.m. on April 3rd, what damage the tornado did to your property, any unusual incidents connected with the tornado and its aftermath you were involved in or observed, and any personal reactions to the tragedy. We believe that this material should form part of the historical record of this day which now joins July 4, 1837 (tornado) and December 19, 1941 (Classic Hall fire) as Hanover's third major disaster. I plan to use some of the material in an extended spread in THE HANOVERIAN and possibly as background for a somewhat more ambitious publishing project. Please check below the appropriate permission and then sign and date the sheet. You may, of course, attach other sheets of data if you wish. And do you mind dropping off your contribution to the information desk in the Ad. Bldg. or put it in the campus mail addressed to me? Sometime this week hopefully?

Frank Baker

Dr. Baker -
Here is my article
for your archives (?).
This has 2 extra ~~para~~ para-
graphs which I had to slash
because of space on layout.
Otherwise it is the same.
- Cathy

____ This material is not to be used for publication in any form but only as historical record material to be housed in the college archives.

____ This material may be used for publication as long as my name or the names of my family are not used.

X ____ This material may be published without restriction.

Signed

Catherine M. Koshkik

Date

May 6, 1974

MY PERSONAL ACCOUNT

4/3/74

-Cathy Keohkin

It was 3:51 P.M. I was in the 3rd floor study room preparing an article for our college newspaper concerning the seal slaughter off the coast of Canada, and listening to the gentle whoosh of air flowing through the open window and out into the hall. It had been an unusually muggy day, even with the strong winds.

Suddenly the wind started blowing more violently. The sky turned dark. I ran out into the hall, asking what the hell was going on. I rushed into a room on the south side and looked out the window. What I saw will remain with me for a long time. It didn't look like what I had always thought a tornado would look like. There was no funnel that I could see. What I did see was a black cloud covering the entire southwest skyline. It had ragged edges. It did not appear to be moving.

I don't remember exactly when I realized it was a tornado. I do remember running down the stairs in the dark (the electricity had gone out) shouting to people to open the windows. For a while we could not breathe. Grit was flying around the air. I went hysterical at the foot of the stairs. I can remember trying to get down another flight of stairs when we had already reached the basement. The tornado must have hit while we were on our way down the stairs.

The recreation room was a wreck. Lamps had been blown across the room. Part of the ceiling had fallen in. Debris littered the floor.

The girls were great. Once the initial shock was over everyone was very helpful. Nobody seemed able to believe what had happened.

A few of us went outside to investigate. Trees were down all over the

more

place. Some of the bicycles had been thrown across the lawn. Trees were down on top of cars and were blocking the roads. My car barely escaped having part of the roof of Donner Hall fall on it. I was one of the lucky ones-- my car sustained only one broken window. Roofs were off of buildings. The Phi Mu sorority house lost its 3rd floor. We had not had much time to survey the damage before we were ordered back into the building. We were still on alert. There were strong thunder storm cells in and around Louisville and southern Indiana.

We huddled in the recreation rooms until about 6:30 P.M. Finally we were allowed to leave the building and eat supper. The damage done to the campus was absolutely incredible. The tower of Donner Residence Hall was blown off, as was the roofing of most of the buildings. Our water tower was blown away. Power lines were down. Most of the windows had exploded. It seemed there was hardly a tree left standing.

At 7:00 I returned to my dormitory to find the front door gone. We were to have an 8:00 curfew. We began emergency proceedings. Toilet facilities were set up fallout shelter-style. Most of the rooms were covered with shattered glass and shingles, but with everyone working together we were able to do a fairly good job of cleaning up.

8:00 P.M.--we were ordered back down to the recreation rooms in the basement. We were to spend the night there. The radio reports started pouring in. Louisville had had extensive damage. In fact almost all of northern Kentucky and south-central Indiana had been hit. The death count was nearing 100. Hanover had one recorded death so far.

My own personal thoughts were very intense. My most immediate thoughts were for mine and the girls' safety. I didn't want to die. There was a time when I thought I might. After the initial shock I started worrying about the

animals left out in the disaster. My fish was safe even though most everything else in the room had been blown away. I worried about my parents back in Tennessee. Would they hear? What would they do when they couldn't reach me? Did they themselves have tornados? I found out later they had.

There is no way to describe the feelings we went through that night. Hanover was completely isolated. Roads were blocked. We had no water. We had no electricity. We could make no outside calls.

Although it was an experience which I would never like to see repeated, I feel we were very lucky. The unity and unselfishness with which everyone worked was fantastic. The men of the college community patrolled the area all night. Helen McCally, our dormitory director (and also a native Tennessean), was fantastic. I've heard that disasters bring people closer together. That was certainly true for the women staying in the basement of Katharine Parker Hall that night.

I don't know how we will handle the reconstruction of Hanover College. I don't know what we will do tomorrow. All through the disaster I just kept remembering those words made famous by Scarlett O'Hara--"tomorrow is another day".