

## "Twister Damages Properties in 1937"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Several days before thousands of local residents attended the Carroll County Centennial Celebration, a tornado damaged properties north of Westminster. Damage from the May 27, 1937 storm was reported in the June 4 issue of the Democratic Advocate newspaper:

"The twister that struck at Stonersville and vicinity on Thursday of last week and caused havoc amount farm buildings and trees, we give you further damage reported.

One side of the metal barn roof on the bank barn of Wesley Warehime was completely cleaned of its sheeting and also damaged trees.

On the Sterling Bixler farm, along the Littlestown road, tenanted by Reuben Morningstar a 45 by 90-foot bank barn was completely demolished, a silo was wrecked, and a house roof damaged and many windows blown in. Between the Bixler farm and Gilbert's Inn 30 trees were down. Twenty-two of them in a row along the State road.

Roofing from the Bixler barn was blown half a mile to the Oscar Essich property. The barn and windmill on the Sterling Little farm were damaged.

Oscar Essich had his barn roof partly blown away and a new silo turned over.

A silo was pushed over and workshop was demolished for John Garner.

Half of the barn roof of John Lemmon's property was carried away.

On the John Nelson farm on Bachman Valley road, the barn was damaged and silo down and windows in the house were smashed.

At Clarence Hyle's a silo was carried 200 feet and hurled into a wind pump a mass of twisted wreckage. A small shed was blown several hundred yards and splintered. Fifteen trees were leveled to the ground.

The house on the farm is tenanted by Mervin Cushman. A board was hurtled into the dwelling through the pantry window. Mrs. Amos Smelser had a narrow escape when debris blew into the pantry window. The Smelser chicken house was turned upside down. The driveway was covered with a twisted mass of galvanized roofing and tree limbs.

The twister apparently reached the end of its career on the John Bankert farm where a majestic pine tree, an ancient landmark, fell prey before it spent its force or was lifted. The tree stood just six feet from the front porch. It was blown down in an opposite direction from the house. Mrs. Bankert with her daughters Martha and Jean were at a front window watching the storm when the mighty pine crashed.

Damage extended along the Littlestown road a distance of a mile or more from the Halbert Poole place to Gilbert's Inn. The small cement block garage on the Poole farm had the front pushed in. Poles and trees were down all along the highway between these points.

The storm crossed the Taneytown road about two miles from Westminster at Meadow Branch. Many handsome and prized old trees at Meadow Branch, the farm of C. Ray Fogle, were ruined. A dozen of the 100-year-old maple trees were stripped of branches or twisted off, a 150-year-old beech tree, an arbor vita tree 100 years old and twelve or more apple trees. Mr. Fogle's auto which stood in the driveway had the front damaged from a crashing limb.

Mrs. William E. Roop at Meadow Branch said she rushed up to the porch in time to see a large dinner bell fall. The barn on Elder Roop's farm had part of the roof blown and small buildings were damaged. An old white oak tree at the mill race on the Roop farm which dated from 1816 was thrown across the race. One tree which crashed across the Taneytown road held up a long line of traffic for some time." Although somewhat uncommon, tornados, or cyclones as they were once known, periodically visit Carroll. Fortunately, the damage has historically been confined to a small number of properties.

Photo caption: The historic Gilbert's Inn, property which once stood opposite the Westminster Airport, property narrowly escaped damage during a May 27, 1937 tornado. Historical Society of Carroll County post card collection.