

# November 1911 tornado did strange things in Bedford

*"At the same time that the storm struck Bloomington Saturday night at 11 o'clock, a tornado spent its force on Bedford, and that town suffered a loss that is estimated at between \$300,000 and \$400,000."*

— *Bloomington Weekly Courier*, Nov. 13, 1911.

The *Courier* called the violent weather a tornado, but a wire service story gave it another name — hurricane. Whatever it was, technically speaking, it left widespread wreckage behind.

Fortunately, in Bedford there were few people on the street when the weather turned ugly. According



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

to the *Courier*, the wind had been blowing hard all day and began to pick up velocity toward evening.

Some Bedford people could consider themselves very lucky. The newspaper reported, "A musical entertainment at one of the churches dismissed just as the heaviest down-

pour of rain came, and several of the children in the chorus were caught in the storm."

According to the article, the limestone companies in that town seemed to get the worst of the storm, because it struck in the northern part of Bedford where they were. At the new mill of Shea & Donnelley, sheds were blown down, the tramways destroyed."

At that particular mill, a freak thing happened. The *Courier* related, "A freak of the storm was seen here when two incandescent light globes were found on top of the brick unbroken."

Loss at the P.M. and B. Quarry was estimated to be between \$30,000 and \$40,000. The Ingall and Back Diamond were heavily damaged, but the freaky storm left the Climax and Bedford Cut Stone Company — directly across the railroad tracks — barely damaged.

Owners of the Stone City Steel Construction Company discovered that the storm had moved the 150 by 100-foot plant five feet away from its foundation. Other industrial casualties were the Brooks and Furst-Kerber Mills. At another site, two 125-foot smoke stacks tumbled down, and a 12-inch stone wall was

subtracted from the local bank.

Meanwhile, some of the people of Bedford experienced the tornado first-hand. Several of them were injured by flying debris.

The *Courier* explained, "The entire family of O.L. Fish had a sensation when the house was lifted three feet from its foundation. The lamps were not even blown out by the wind."

A just-completed house belonging to Charles Baston was reduced to a pile of lumber. Added the *Courier*, "James Samuel Fisher saved the

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