

Injuries and Deaths Caused by Fall on the Farm

I am going to share some stories today about farmers being injured in falls, some who even passed away as a result. Be warned there are some sad stories and the details might be difficult to read.

In 1901 Ned Tierny was a 42-year-old farmer living on the Albany Road near the Green County line with his wife and large family of children. He had gone to Evansville where he loaded his wagon with lumber on September 23. He fell from his wagon on the way home when the neck yoke on the team broke. Landing under the wheels, his head was crushed. He died instantly. "The shock when the tongue struck the ground threw him under the wheel and crushed out his life. The accident occurred near the Holmes farm about a mile south of Evansville."

Another unfortunate incident involving a load of lumber occurred on March 25, 1910. Carl Rothenbuehler, nearly 70, fell from his wagon late in the afternoon while on the way to his home in Monroe Township. He was found early in the evening lying in the road near the John Hasse farm just beyond the county farm. Believing that he was under the influence of liquor and would be able to take care of himself later, he was taken to a shed on the Hasse farm and left there.

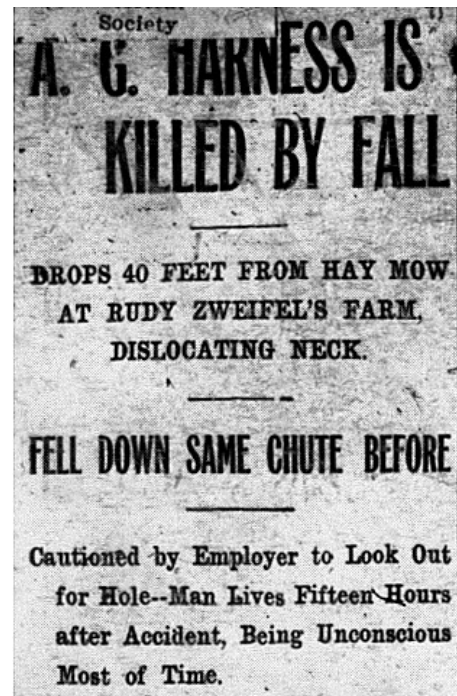
When Mr. Hasse went to the shed the next morning, he found Rothenbuehler was still alive. However, when he returned a short time later, Rothenbuehler had passed away. County Coroner F. A. Shriner was called and took the body back to Shriner's undertaking establishment for examination. It was found that the right ear was nearly torn off, there was a fracture of the left collarbone, and two ribs on the right side and his breastbone were broken. There was also a bad bruise on his head. Dr. L. A. Moore, who made the examination, thought it was likely that Rothenbuehler had fallen from the wagon and was squeezed between the wheel and the load and then run over after he hit the ground. Since there was no mysterious circumstance, there was no coroner's inquest.

It was learned that Rothenbuehler had worked for Leonard Krause at different times during the previous three or four years. On the day of the accident, Rothenbuehler had come to town with Krause and a hired man employed on the Krause farm. Krause, who had assisted the men with loading the lumber at the yards of the Monroe Lumber and Fuel company, went ahead in his own rig. The other two men followed with the load of lumber, which was to be used to build a house for Rothenbuehler. The hired man was driving the load of 800 feet of lumber and never noticed that Rothenbuehler was missing.

Rothenbuehler was a native of Switzerland; his wife had passed away there in 1887. He was survived by a son John and four daughters, Mrs. Fred Rufenacht, Mrs. Michael Ruhberger, Mrs. Fred Baer, and Mrs. Lena Wittenbach, the last named was still in Switzerland. He was an uncle of Ulrich and Jacob Rothenbuehler. Ulrich was proprietor of the City Hotel and Jacob had sold his interest in that business shortly before this incident and moved to Colorado.

Those of you who remember raising hay from the wagon into the hay mow of the barn using the hay fork and pulley system will appreciate how fortunate John Bieri was that he was not killed. Bieri lived four miles southeast of Monroe and was struck by a hayfork while unloading hay in July 1910. He was thrown from the load to the ground from which he received serious injuries that would keep him confined for several days. Dr. S. R. Moyer conducted an examination and found no broken bones.

Another tragedy occurred on September 6, 1912 when A. G. Harness fell 40 feet down the hay chute of the barn on the Rudy Zweifel farm two miles west of Monroe. Harness, a 48-year-old cement worker, had walked further west of this farm to help build a silo, but that job was not ready. On his way



This headline from the September 7, 1912 issue of the Monroe Evening Times gives a brief summary of one of the sad accidental falls that happened too often in the farming community.

home, he stopped at Zweifel's and asked for work. He was sent to the hay mow to throw the alfalfa back as it was hoisted into the mow by the hay fork. Zweifel had warned him several times during the afternoon about the chute since he had fallen down the same chute two years earlier. Harness replied that he knew where the chute was and he would be careful of it. The first time he had only fallen a few feet because the mow wasn't as full then.

After one of the forks of hay had been raised into the mow and the fork tripped, Zweifel noticed the hay was not touched. He called to Harness who did not answer. Zweifel then went to the mow, which was almost full, but was not able to find Harness. Zweifel then went to the basement where he found Harness lying directly under the hay chute. He was half conscious for a few minutes, but soon "passed into insensibility and remained in a state of coma."

He was carried into the house where Dr. W. B. Gnagi was called. The physician found that Harness' neck was dislocated and his skull and shoulder were fractured. He then telephoned for M. C. Durst to bring a rig with a cot on it. Harness was taken to his house, north across the street from the county jail (now the Jailhouse Tap) that evening, where he remained unconscious until he passed away the following morning at 6:00. As was the tradition at the time, the funeral was held at the home before the burial in Greenwood Cemetery.