

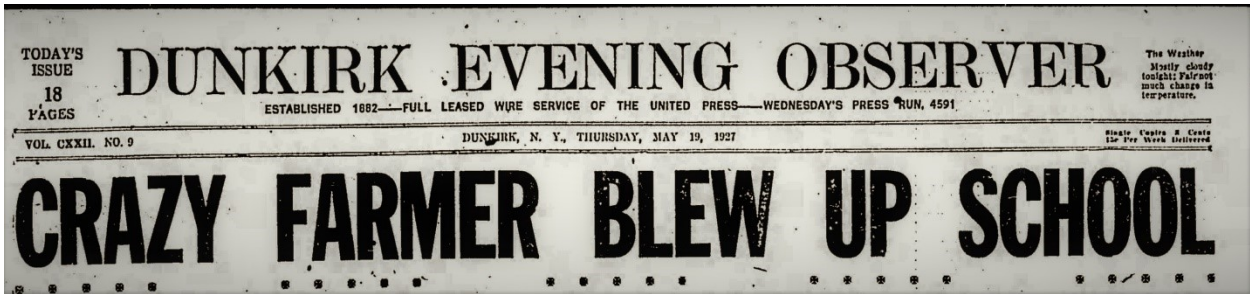
Known as the "deadliest act of school violence in U.S. history," the May 18, 1927 Bath School explosion in Bath Township,



Michigan leveled a school, killed 45, injured dozens, and scarred innumerable lives forever. Newspapers from all over the U.S. reported on the murderous explosion with headlines



"School Bomber Known As Demon But Not Insane."



For weeks and from coast to coast newspapers reported on the Bath community devastation. The perpetrator, Andrew Kehoe, murdered his wife, burned his farm buildings, set off 500 pounds of dynamite in the school and then blew up his own vehicle as one last strike against humanity.



The Okemos community too was affected by the violence of the Bath disaster. Friends, relatives, acquaintances and professional alliances intertwined lives in Okemos to those in Bath. The Robb family, who lost daughter Elsie Mildred, moved from Bath to Okemos and daughter Florence Lorene "Lorene" was a 1937 graduate of Okemos High. Francis Hoeppner, 13, whose family moved from Okemos to Bath when he was 10. Eva Gubbins Hoyt and family grew up and attended Okemos through 11<sup>th</sup> grade, then finished at East Lansing. Eva was critically injured while teaching at the time of the explosion. Lucile Pryer, teacher at Okemos High School in the 1940's, taught at Bath for a season. And the relationship tentacles between the two communities to this day continue to gently be entangled. The people of Okemos were horrified to open their newspapers to headlines crying, "School Dynamiter Kills 41," "Explosion Ruins School; 50 Killed."

Detroit Free Press (Detroit, Michigan) Friday 20 May 1927

## **KEHOE JUST MURDEROUS, DECLARES SUPERVISOR**

### **Not Crazy But Had Uncontrollable Temper, He Declares**

Lansing, May 19 - "Let's bury our dead and build a new school house," S. E. Ewing, supervisor of Bath township, Michigan, consoled and counseled his friends, neighbors and fellow citizens



MRS. ROSCOE HART, BATH TEACHER, AND HER CLASS OF 5TH GRADERS ARE SHOWN IN THIS PICTURE, taken some time ago. Mrs. Hart died Thursday in a Lansing hospital and practically every member of her room was either killed or injured in the blast which exploded directly beneath them.

today.

In his home lay the body of his 11-year-old son, Earl, one of the children who died because of the grievance of Andrew P. Kehoe, treasurer of the Bath school board.



LSJ ARCHIVES

Identifying bodies: Members of the community begin the heartbreaking and grisly task of identifying victims of the Bath School Disaster of 1927. On May 18, Andrew Kehoe set off 500 pounds of dynamite he had packed inside the school. The bombing killed 45 people - including 38 children. The bombing remained the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil until the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, which killed 168 people.

## Bodies Taken To Homes

In the homes of his fellow townsmen were also the bodies of the pupils who died that Kehoe might vent his rage on the little, the helpless and the innocent.

Nearby, in other homes, were the bodies of the teachers who proved themselves heroines and martyrs.

Twelve miles away - here in Lansing - were the bodies of the other dead and the bruised, burned and injured forms of the living victims of the terrible explosion that yesterday destroyed the Bath consolidated school.

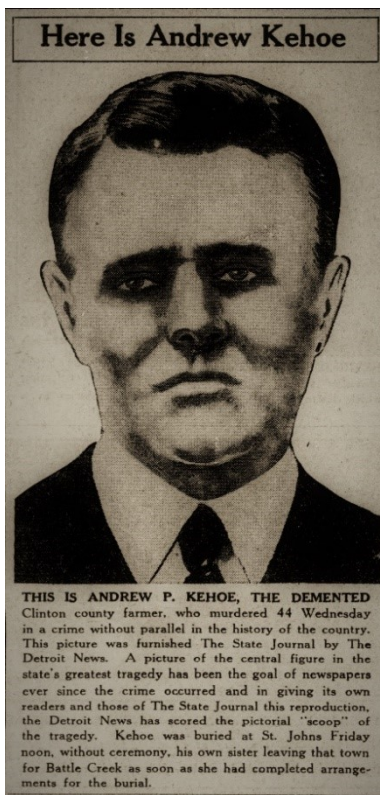


Forty-four dead, 37 of them children; 43 others painfully and dangerously injured; the school destroyed; the Kehoe residence and farm buildings razed to the ground - that almost tells the story of the Bath disaster, almost, excepting only the grief and the determination of men like Supervisor Ewing-to say nothing of the broken hearted mothers.

Ewing is dry-eyed as he discusses the great community bereavement with the callers at his home. The sobs come from another part of the house.

Murderously Inclined.

"Yes, I guess I am the chief official here," he said to a messenger of Governor Fred W. Green who is seeking out the immediate needs of the sufferers and arranging the financial assistance in restoring the school. "We're not an incorporated village, just a township. The population of this little community is less than 300 and we were so proud to have such a fine school here.



"There is no question about the cause of the explosion. Andrew Kehoe blew up the school because he was unable to control the school board, because he had financial reverses and because of his wife's illness. I don't think he was crazy - just murderously inclined. He had an uncontrollable temper. He got up at meetings and raved and cussed and damned everybody. That was his nature."

He was asked about Kehoe's objections to paying school taxes, which was said to have been the cause of Kehoe's dynamiting of the big building, the Kehoe's not having any children.



LSJ ARCHIVES

**Andrew Kehoe, left, and his wife, Nellie Kehoe.**

"Last year he paid \$350 taxes," the supervisor said. "He complained bitterly and this year he paid his personal property tax of \$9.63, but said he couldn't pay his real estate tax of \$350.61, of which \$167 was the share of the school board."

Help To Be Given.

"Three townships united in putting up this school five years ago. It cost \$42,000 and of that indebtedness \$4,000 has been paid.

"I believe the taxes are about \$5 per thousand higher for this school than they were when we had the old school districts. I hope we don't have to go back to the old district plan, not for my children's sake, but for the sakes of the children left to our neighborhood."



The governor's messenger assured the stricken father that help would be given the saddened community in restoring it as an educational center. A few other houses in Bath were visited in company with a delegation of ministers who are oft repeating the words of the Lord:

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

They are the Revs. W. C. Colman of DeWitt, L. H. Nixon of Lowell and W. J. Weidenhammer of Onondaga, Methodists. Their brother clergyman of Bath, Rev. Scott McDonald, is in Lansing, with the body of his daughter, Thelma, 7 years old, one of the victims of Kehoe's tax mania.

Ministers Give Aid.

"So we are calling at every home and giving what aid and comfort religion can give to the grieving ones," Dr. Coleman said. "We are offering the services of a clergyman for every funeral. We don't think there will be one big service, as most everyone wants to bury his little one at a different time and place. It is likely there will later be some kind of a community service, but the interments will be separate."



**RITES FOR BLAST  
VICTIM AT OKEMOS**

**Francis Hoepfner Was Former Resident of Village;  
Funeral Today**

Special to The State Journal:  
OKEMOS, May 21 — Francis Hoepfner, 13, son of Mr. and Mrs. Otto Hoepfner, was one of the victims of the Bath tragedy. The lad was born near Okemos and lived in this community until about three years ago. Funeral services will be held at the home, east of Bath, Saturday afternoon, the Rev. F. D. Hague, pastor of the Haslett Baptist church, officiating.

Besides the parents he is survived by one sister, Marjorie, and one brother, Raymond.

Interment will be in the new Okemos cemetery.



Lieutenant L. A. Lyon of the state police is in charge at Bath, and he tells a story of the heroism of two of his troopers and a corporal, modestly leaving himself out of the story, but the others



say his part in the rescue and the danger was no less than that of his subordinates. Not all of the dynamite exploded.



"Troopers Ernest (Buck) Haldeman and Donald McNaughton crawled down under the wreckage through a hole and handed out 600 pounds of dynamite to Corporal Wright G. Needham. The troopers and the corporal knew their danger; they had to disconnect the caps and wires that formed a network under the building."

The first call to be received by the police was that the farm house of Kehoe was on fire. En route to it Needham, Haldeman and McNaughton heard the school building blast and raced there on their motorcycles. Lieutenant Lyon was a few minutes behind them. Their statements agree that the school came perhaps 10 minutes after the Kehoe property was blown up.

Neglected His Farm.

State Fire Marshal Charles V. Lane was calling witnesses all afternoon at an official inquiry. His view of what had happened was this:

Kehoe had been planning the wholesale slaughter of the innocents for several weeks, perhaps months and maybe years. He had been obtaining dynamite from the state agricultural school which supplies it for stump blowing and like purposes.

Kehoe had opposed the building of the school, opposed it because it would increase his taxes, and he had no children going to school. Two years or so ago Kehoe was elected a school trustee and then made treasurer.

He neglected his farm, which was valued for taxation purposes at \$8,500 and for the last few years had not paid the interest on the mortgage. Recently the mortgage was foreclosed, although the farm was a fine one and an industrious farmer could have made an excellent living from it.

Kehoe decided to take revenge on the inanimate object of his hatred, the school building and all the human beings connected with it. A recent statement of his to a teacher that if the school was to hold a picnic they had better do it soon or they never would have a chance, was today regarded as significant.

Beat Horse To Death.

His neighbor, David M. Harte, told how he had seen Kehoe beat his mare to death. "The most brutal exhibition I ever witnessed, and he shot my dog, too, for no reason at all." Harte said today. "He had no friends, a good word for no one, but was just a sullen, mean tempered man of unpleasant personality."

Mrs. Kehoe's body indicated she had been clothed in only a night gown when death came to her. The home was in millions of pieces, only the chimney remaining erect.

Corporal Needham said he believed she had fled from the house either immediately before or after the dynamite was exploded in it and ran as far as the stable when it crumbled and fell in flames and dust. The skull was crushed and this may or may not have been done by the husband directly. One of her feet was caught in the wheels of a cart, which might have been blown against her and may have tripped her and thereby caused her to be prevented from escaping from the inferno.



Detroit Free Press (Detroit, Michigan) Friday 20 May 1927

## **DEAD TOTAL 44 AS FARM GIVES UP WIFE'S BODY**

**Mrs. Kehoe, Slain by Husband, Found at Home; Source of Dynamite Sought.**

## **INJURED TEACHER DIES IN LANSING HOSPITAL**

### **Funerals of Victims Planned; Inquest Called for Monday**

Lansing, Mich., May 19 - An appeal for funds for the relief of the stricken community of Bath was issued tonight by a committee named by Governor Fred W. Green.

The statement follows:

"Pursuant to and in hearty accord with the prompt request of Governor Green for aid from the citizens of Michigan to the woefully stricken township of Bath, both for personal emergency relief and for the rehabilitation of the shattered school building, we, the undersigned, representing both of these needs, make the following statement and appeal:

"We ask that mayors of cities and supervisors of townships throughout the state, or any other accredited local agencies , receive local voluntary offerings and to forward the same to the governor's committee in Lansing.

"It is understood that the regular Red Cross agencies of Clinton and Ingham counties shall be responsible for the disbursement of the emergency relief, and that the governor's committee shall

hold and expend in conjunction with Bath township authorities, the balance remaining for permanent rehabilitation.

"The most gruesome and pitiful tragedy that Michigan has perhaps ever experienced appeals to our sympathies and claims our aid."

Detroit Free Press (Detroit, Michigan) Friday 20 May 1927

Bath, Mich., May 19 - State police instituted an investigation today to learn how Andrew Kehoe, Bath farmer, obtained approximately 600 pounds of dynamite and gun powder with which he wrecked the Bath Consolidated school, killing 38 children and five adults, and razed the buildings on his farm, after slaying his wife. Another mystery which state police are attempting to solve is how the farmer carried out the complicated wiring in the schoolhouse to set off his explosive without being detected.

It is estimated that several weeks were needed to place the explosive and connect it, ready to destroy the school building. That the farmer had spent weeks laying the scene for his slaughter was indicated by the fact that some of the unexploded dynamite taken from the building had been there for that length of time.

Other developments in the tragedy today included the increasing of the death list to 44 by the finding of the body of Mrs. Kehoe in the ruins of their farm home and the death in a Lansing hospital of Mrs. Blanche Harte, 30 years old, a teacher; appointment of a committee by Governor Green to raise any needed funds for relief work; the announcement by Prosecutor William C. Searl of Clinton

county that an inquest would be held at the Bath town hall Monday, and the mysterious burning last night of a few articles of furniture saved from the Kehoe home.

More than two score injured in the explosion are in a Lansing hospital, some of them in a critical condition. The number slightly injured cannot be ascertained but it is believed to be between 40 and 50.

#### Funerals Planned.

Stunned in inaction by the magnitude of the tragedy, the community groped slowly through tears today toward readjustment. Sad-faced parents came to view the ruins again and to console each other in their grief. Funeral arrangements for the victims were left for tomorrow. There was talk of a community service, but this was generally discouraged from a desire to avoid attracting crowds of curious.

The finding of the body of Kehoe's wife this morning by sheriff's deputies was not entirely unexpected. State troopers had combed the state last night for her, following clues that she was in a tuberculosis sanitarium. When this inquiry failed to disclose any trace of her, attention was directed to a search of the ruins of the home.

How the body escaped discovery by the thousands who swarmed over the place yesterday is hard to understand for, though charred beyond recognition, it was found in plain sight on a milk car, near a small hen-coop. This building is the only one on the farm that was not destroyed, and a quantity of dynamite was found buried under some straw in it.



It is the belief of Prosecuting Attorney Searl that Kehoe either cut his wife's throat or smashed in her skull then tied her to the cart and set it afire.

#### Furniture Fire Mystery.

Piled around the gruesome find was a quantity of silverware and jewels and a metal cash box. Through a slit in the top of this could be seen the ashes of several bank notes.

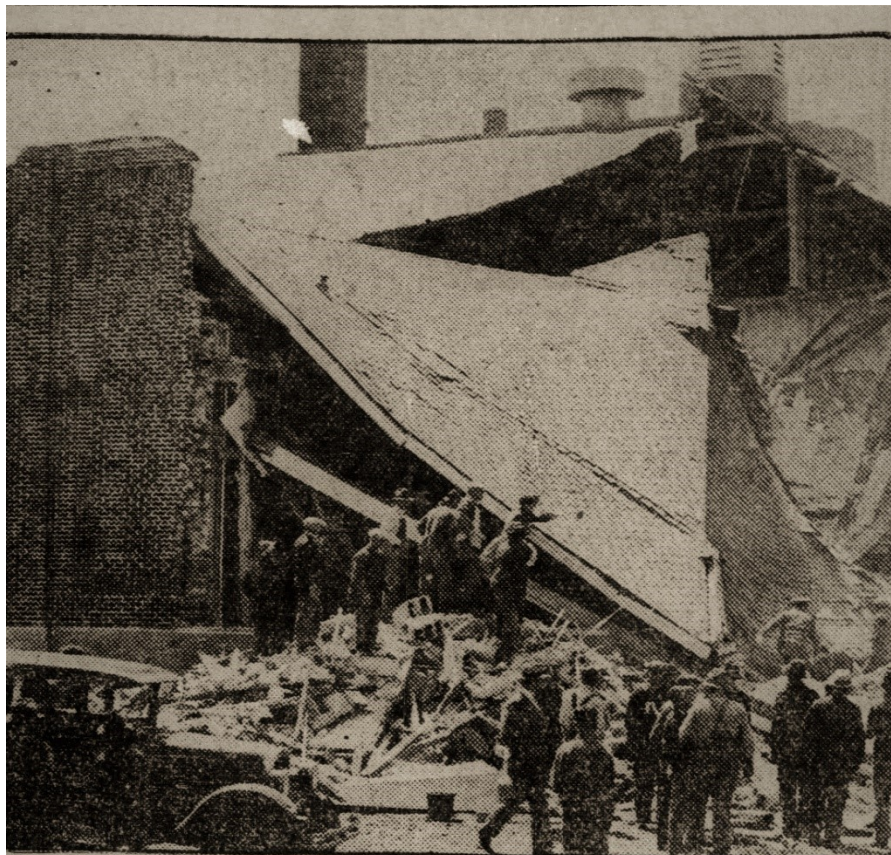
Officers were unable to account for the burning of a davenport, a small table and three chairs, that members of a Consumers Power company road crew had taken out of the burning house. This was intact late last night but was found in ashes this morning.

O. H. Buck, foreman of the road crew and several of his associates unknowingly risked their lives at the Kehoe farm and again at the school. Buck gave a graphic account of what happened. "We were on the way from Lansing to Bath," buck said. "Arriving near the Kehoe place, we saw that the buildings were afire and speeded up. The south side of the house was in flames when we got there. We ran around to the north windows and two of us crawled in. We shoved out a davenport, a table and some chairs. Then, in a corner of the room, I found a pile of dynamite. Without thinking much about what I was doing, I picked up an armful and handed it to one of the men. The room was filled with smoke, so we got out. Then I heard a woman across the road, at the Harte place, yelling that the school had been blown up.

We started for our car, and had just arrived there when a terrific blast let go in the house behind us. I was slammed against the car.

Thought World Coming to End.

"We got in and drove rapidly to Bath. A tragic scene confronted us at the school. The north half of the building was a tumble of

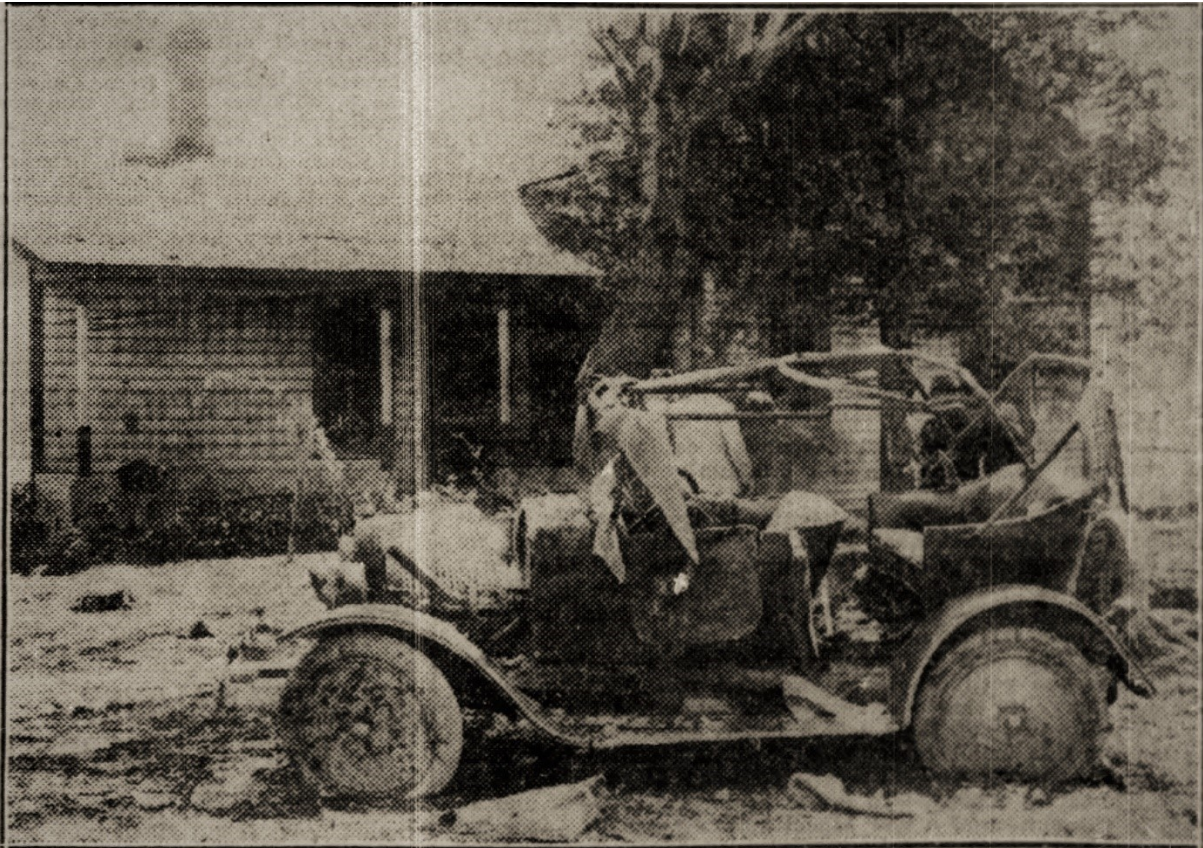


A remarkable closeup picture of the wrecked schoolhouse at Bath, Mich., in which 41 persons, 36 of them pupils, met death, is shown above. Two dynamite charges in the basement of the school were set off by Andrew Kehoe, treasurer of the school board, who was demented by the foreclosure of mortgages upon his home. A rescue crew is visible, searching for more bodies among the tangled ruins.

debris. Several men were digging into the wreckage. We could hear the imprisoned children calling for help.



I ran across the lawn and began helping. I had no more than started, when I was bowled over by an explosion at the roadside.



**SUPT. E. E. HUYCK'S CAR, WHICH WAS WRECKED BY THE EXPLOSION** which killed the superintendent, Kehoe, and two other citizens of the community, is pictured here. The car was parked opposite the school and not far distant from Kehoe's car which contained the dynamite.

I got up and looked around. A great cloud of black smoke was rolling up. Under it I saw the tangled remains of a car. Part of a human body was caught in the steering wheel. Three or four other bodies were lying on the ground nearby. I began to feel as though the world was coming to an end.



"I guess I was a bit hazy. Anyway, the next thing I remember I was out on the street. One of our men was binding up the wounds of Glenn Smith, the postmaster. His leg had been blown off. I went back to the building and helped with the rescue work until we were ordered to stop while a search was made for dynamite."

Jess Curtis, another of the road crew, was standing 11 feet from the Kehoe car when the explosion occurred. A tree between him and the car probably saved his life. He was knocked down and a piece of glass from the windshield cut through his overalls,

*Wrecked Car in Which Kehoe Ended Own Life*



Above is shown what was left of the automobile of Andrew Kehoe, Bath school dynamiter, after he had committed suicide by blowing himself and the car to pieces following the blast by which he sent two score persons, most of whom were school children, into eternity.

grazed his flesh and crashed against a house 30 feet away. The body of the school superintendent was hurled past him and landed 30 feet from the car, in a mangled heap.

### Crime Long Planned.

The placard, "criminals are made, not born," found wired to a fence on the Kehoe farm, may give an inkling to the crime psychology of the man, who with measured deliberation attempted to wreck vengeance on the community where he had lived for eight years. Evidence disclosed today indicates that he mapped out his plans of destruction months ago. He was notified in June, 1926, that the mortgage on his farm would be foreclosed, and that may have been the circumstance that started the clock-work of madness in his brain.

He had been waging a difficult struggle against poverty. His wife was virtually an invalid. He had repeated crop failures. Pride and independence were his principal characteristics, neighbors say.

"He was one of the most independent men I have ever known," said M. W. Keyes, secretary of the school board. "He was also headstrong. During his three years on the school board he opposed the majority in practically every instance. He never approved the teachers the rest of us wanted, and even fought the appointment of bus drivers. He appeared to have a tax mania and fought the expenditure of money for the most necessary equipment.



## Alarm Clock Times Blast.

"I have no doubt that he made his plans last fall to blow up the school. He was an experienced electrician and the board employed him in November to make some repairs on the school



lighting system. He had ample opportunity then to plant the explosives and lay the wires for touching it off."



Prosecutor Searl revealed that a shattered alarm, clock had been found in the basement of the school and that it was connected with a battery and wires leading to various caches of dynamite and gunpowder. The face of the clock was intact. The hands pointed to 8:45.

Kehoe is believed to have brought the clock to the building yesterday morning. He was there from 7:45 to about 8:00. Then he drove around the mile square south of the village, passing his farm, and probably witnessing the initial explosions there. Reconstruction of his movements show he drove back to the village, arriving a few minutes after the blast.

Kills Three With Self.

Realizing that his diabolical scheme to wreck the entire school building and part of the village had failed in part, he signaled frantically to Superintendent Huyck, who was assisting with the rescue work. Huyck ran out to the car. They conversed for a moment, then Kehoe leaned back in the car. As he did, the explosion came, tearing the machine into pieces, and killing himself, the superintendent, Glenn Smith and Nelson McFarren.

Bernice Sterling, first grade teacher, who was in the building but escaped injury, says she telephoned Kehoe yesterday morning and asked permission to use his grove for a picnic for her class. He told her that "if she wanted a picnic she had better have it at once."

Definite proof that Kehoe was planning his debacle of death early in April was brought out at the Inquiry before State Fire Marshal Charles V. Lane and the Clinton county prosecutor early tonight. Neighbors testified that the man was wiring the buildings at his farm in March, and that he evaded questions regarding his purpose.

Numerous witnesses declared that the man had an ungovernable temper, and that he developed a mania for killing things. He beat one of his horses to death last spring, it was stated. Before he set the clock which touched off the explosives in his buildings, he girdled the trees about his home and poured acid on the shrubbery. Another indication of his long and systematic planning of ruin is seen in the fact that he neglected all spring planting on this farm.

Shattered parts of an army rifle and exploded cartridges found near the spot where Kehoe's car was destroyed, lead to the belief that he had intended to wreck vengeance in another form had his dynamiting scheme failed. The report that he fired a shot into a load of dynamite in his car, thus exploding it, is generally disbelieved. That he had the explosives connected with the battery, and set it off by pressing on the starter is the generally accepted theory.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Monday 23 May 1927

## **WITNESSES GIVE BLAST VERSIONS**

### **JANITOR, BOARD MEMBER ARE FIRST INQUEST WITNESSES**

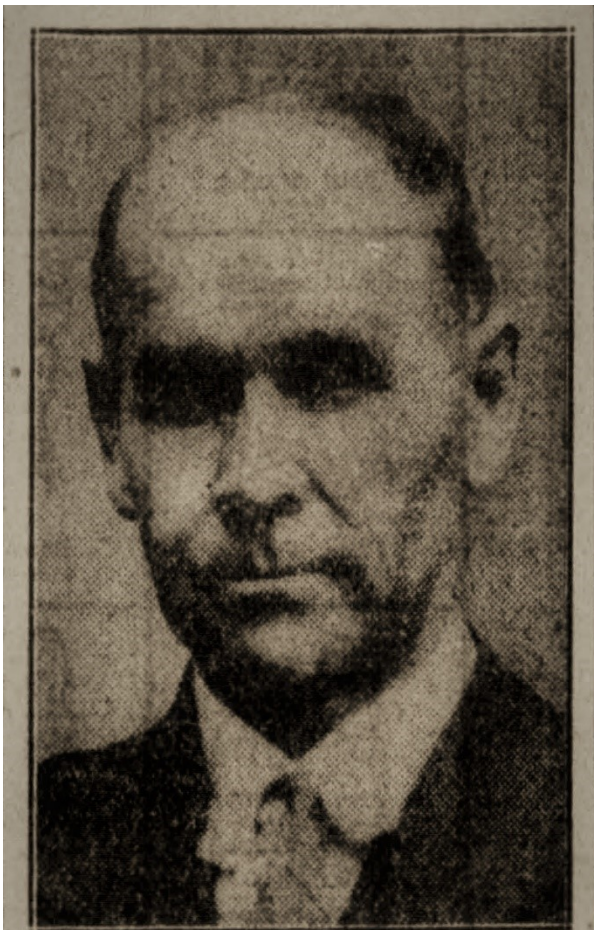
Bath, May 23 - "I'm in an awful hurry."

This is what Andrew Kehoe said just a few moments before the explosion at the Bath consolidated school May 18 when he was encountered in the basement of the school by Frank Smith, janitor, according to Smith's testimony here Monday at the coroner's inquest into the blast that took 44 lives last Wednesday.

But one important point was brought out Monday morning, and reiterated by several witnesses and that was that fierce enmity existed between Andrew Kehoe and E. E. Huyck, superintendent

of the school. The stories of survivors were substantially those told in the first few hours after the fatal blast.

Smith, who is 51 years old, was one of the first witnesses called. He is a brother of Glenn Smith, postmaster, who was killed by the blast. He testified that he had been janitor for eight months, and that he had never noticed anyone in the school building at night. He had, however, he said, noticed that the several trap doors leading beneath the bottom floor of the building, had been left open several



**FRANK SMITH.**

Smith, janitor of the wrecked school at Bath, was in the undamaged part of the building when the explosion took place. He escaped uninjured and took a leading part in rescuing the injured.



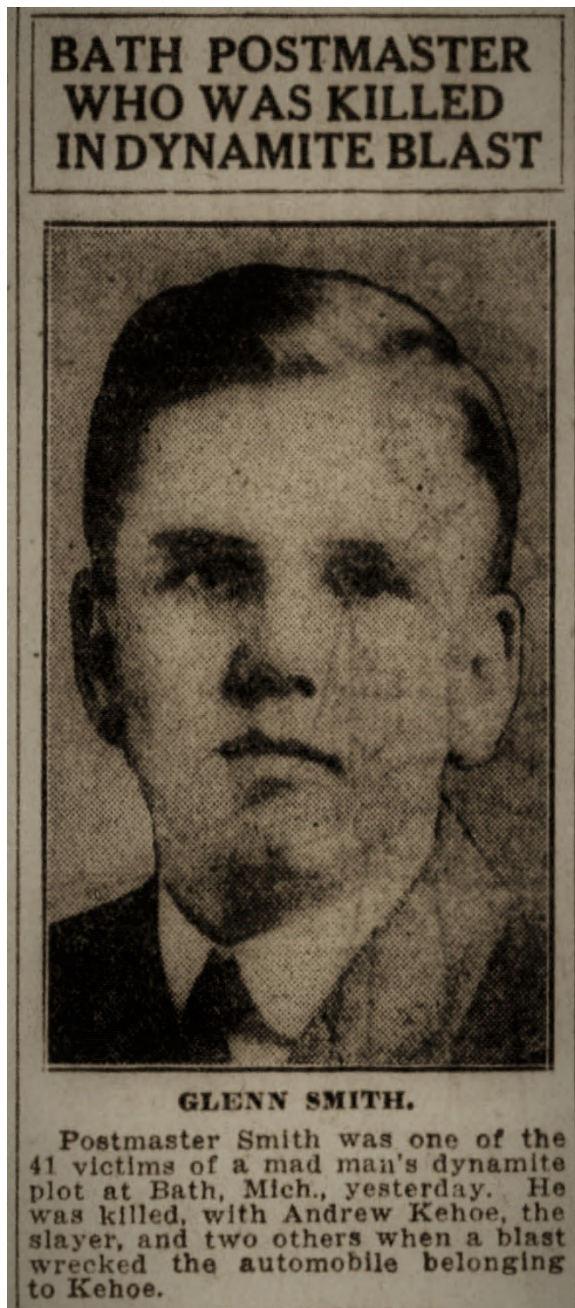
times. These doors were in the floor under which there was no basement, but a space between the flooring and the ground. It was the newest part of the school. Only once did Smith have occasion to enter this recess, and that was to inspect a water pipe. He did not look around further than the pipe, he said.

Shortly before the explosion Smith saw Kehoe and Albert Detloff, another witness called Monday morning. Detloff had encountered Kehoe just before Smith came on the scene. It was at that time that Kehoe said "I'm in an awful hurry," and left quickly. Detloff also left the building after conversing a few moments with Smith.

### Pry Up Roof

School started at 8:30 central standard time, or 9:30 o'clock Lansing time it was brought out. The school was operated on central time out of convenience to the families whose children attended. The explosion took place, in the estimation of Smith, 15 minutes after school started, or at 9:45 o'clock Lansing time. Smith was thrown against the wall by the force of the blast, but he quickly ran upstairs, and began taking children of of the south door. He saw Lynn Harrington helping other children out another door at that time, he said Monday.

Smith and Lawrence Hart secured a telephone pole with which to pry up the roof that had collapsed, he recalled, while they were working, the second explosion occurred, which sent them running



into the street. It was then that Smith saw his brother Glenn Smith, the postmaster, lying in the street with his left leg torn off. He was alive.

"Don't feel bad if I go. I've been hit. It's all up." Glenn Smith said to his brother, according to the latter's testimony. The mangled man was placed in an ambulance, which was followed by his brother in another car. Glenn Smith died just as he was taken into the hospital and before Frank could reach him, Frank testified Monday.

#### Friction Between Kehoe, Board

The first witness called Monday morning was Albert Detloff, 45, a blacksmith, who has been a member of the school board for two years. Mr. Detloff testified to

a "certain friction" between Kehoe and the school board which had evidenced itself when Kehoe tried to have E. E. Huyck, school

superintendent, kept out of school board meetings. Kehoe, Detloff said, was elected to the board three years ago. His term would have expired this coming June. Detloff had talked with Kehoe on Wednesday when he met him in front of the post office, he said. They both went to the office school and into the engine house in the basement, where they met Frank Smith, the janitor, according to the testimony.

Kehoe, said Detloff, suddenly disappeared. Lynn Harrington, a plumber in the village, was also in the basement, fixing the boiler. Detloff went home, he said, but ran back to the school when he heard the explosion. As he went past the telephone exchange, he met Huyck, the school superintendent, who said, "I've done all that can be done. I've called the state department." Huyck said Detloff, evidently referred to the state department of public safety.

Detloff testified that he had taken his daughter, injured by the first explosion, home during the 30-minute interval between the two explosions, and that after the second blast, when he was told that Huyck was dead, he replied "No, he can't be. I just saw him."

It is anticipated that testimony will be taken for two days.

Kehoe, prior to his May 18th mayhem, mailed a box, which was later found to have originally held dynamite, to a local and prominent insurance man, Clyde B. Smith. Smith worked for the Roe Ackerman Company located in the Wilson Building, Lansing. Smith only knew Kehoe because the agency had written the \$6,000 surety bond which Kehoe posted when elected treasurer



of the Bath school board. When the mailed box's existence became known it created quite a stir. Police and postal authorities scrambled to intercept and perhaps avert another explosion.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Thursday 19 May 1927

Records of the Bath school board were found in the box shipped by Andrew Kehoe to Clyde B. Smith, local insurance agent, when it was opened at the state police headquarters in East Lansing Thursday morning.

The box was not found until late Wednesday afternoon at Laingsburg, having been shipped there instead of to Lansing where the package was addressed.

The station master at Laingsburg immediately notified the state police who brought the package to their headquarters at East Lansing Wednesday night and opened it Thursday morning. T. E. Trombla, of Detroit, inspector of the bureau of explosives, aided the state police in locating and opening the box.

The box was one which had previously contained dynamite, apparently to be used for the road construction purposes. The stencil used to address the box to Mr. Smith was said to have been the same as used in painting the sign on the fence at the Kehoe farm which said that "criminals are made, not born."

### Dynamite First Contents

There were several marks on the box which indicated that it had previously contained dynamite and led officers to believe that some of the explosives might have been shipped to Mr. Smith. On one side of the box was stenciled "Allotted by the Bureau of

Public Road, U. S. Department of Agriculture" while in another place on the box were the words "High Explosives, Dangerous."

The box had apparently been cut down in about half the original size and it was estimated by state highway officials that it had contained about 50 pounds of dynamite. Members of the state highway department, however, could not explain where the explosives might have been used as the original address on the box had been removed.

Contained in the box were all of the records of the treasurer of the school board and a letter to Mr. Smith written by Kehoe and explaining that he was leaving the school board and turning all of the records over to Mr. Smith. The letter was written Saturday and the language used would not indicate that it had been written by a crazed person. It was written by an old style typewriter and was signed by Kehoe in his own handwriting.

#### Included All Records

Other papers and books included the treasurer's account book, a check book, cancelled vouchers, deposit books, insurance policies, bonds, stationery and envelopes, all of which were the property of the school board and none of Kehoe's personal belongings. There was also an envelope containing three uncashed checks and on the back of the envelope in red lead pencil writing was endorsed "The enclosed checks were returned uncashed because we did not owe them. A. P. Kehoe." The checks were made payable to the Michigan Education company and the A. N. Palmer company.

Detroit Free Press (Detroit, Michigan) Friday 20 May 1927

## **GRIEF OVER WIFE'S ILLNESS CAUSED MENTAL BREAK, BELIEF**

Battle Creek, May 19 - Grief over this wife's long illness is believed by sisters of Andrew Kehoe, who yesterday dynamited the Consolidated school at Bath, to have brought on a mental condition which they hold responsible for his acts.

Two of the sisters, Miss Agnes Kehoe, 31 Harvard street, and Miss Margaret Kehoe, employed at the F. J. Kellogg company, went to Bath today. The third sister, Mrs. Katherine Rose, 277 East VanBuren street, prostrated over the tragedy, was unable to accompany them

"His mind must have been unbalanced," Mrs. Rose said. "I can't understand it. Mrs. Kehoe had been in ill health for more than a year, and last winter, in addition to what he may have suffered in the way of financial reverses, has brought many hardships to him."

Mrs. Rose said that her brother was secretive and that as far as she knew, none of the sisters here had heard from him recently.

The three sisters here had been led to believe that Kehoe's wife had been taken to Lansing or Jackson recently and that she had not been injured in the blast which wrecked the Kehoe home. It was not until Agnes and Margaret reached Bath today that they learned that Mrs. Kehoe also was dead.

The Kehoes originally came from Tecumseh. Kehoe, said to be about 45, purchased the farm near Bath about 10 years ago and



has since made his residence there with Mr. Kehoe. They had no children.

"My brother was a very fine, intelligent man," Mrs. Rose commented today. "I just can't understand it."

Detroit Free Press (Detroit, Michigan) Friday 20 May 1927

## **DYNAMITER WAS BORN ON FARM NEAR TECUMSEH**

Adrian, Mich., May 19 - Andrew Kehoe, childless farmer who killed his wife and set off the dynamite charges in the Consolidated school building at Bath, Mich., was born on a farm three miles north of Tecumseh, Mich. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Kehoe and one of a family of 11 children. He was a graduate of the Tecumseh high school and, except for the last nine years, spent all his life in the vicinity of Tecumseh. He had the reputation of being a shy, bashful man, with almost a genius for electrical and mechanical matters. While attending high school at Tecumseh many years ago he was also known by the instructors as an inventive genius and was deeply interested in electrical projects and this interest continued after he left school.

In the settlement of the Kehoe estate, Andrew Kehoe received 185 acres of land which he sold about six years ago just before moving to Bath. Neighbors of Kehoe before his removal from the vicinity of Tecumseh describe him as a good natured, likable and never moody.

Lewis Kehoe, a brother, lives seven miles northwest of Adrian and when told what his brother had done said that he had not read the news yet as he was afraid to read it.

When told further particulars Kehoe said that his brother must have been crazy. He said his brother's wife had been ill for a long time, but he was not aware that Andrew was in financial difficulties.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Thursday 19 May 1927

## **FIND TEACHER DIED HEROINE**

### **FIND BODY OF MISS HAZEL WEATHERBY WITH EACH ARM SHIELDING CHILD**



**MISS HAZEL WEATHER-**  
bee, 22, of Howard City,  
died in the ruins of the Bath  
Consolidated school house  
with two of her child pupils  
clasped in her arms.

Bath, May 19 - Miss Hazel Weatherby, 22, of Howard City, a teacher in the Bath school went to her tragic death Wednesday morning trying to save the lives of two of her pupils, it was shown when her body was extricated from the ruins of the consolidated school.

Sitting in an upright position, Miss Weatherby was found with the tiny still body of a child under each arm. Evidence leads to the deduction that she was making one desperate attempt, at the almost certain loss of her own life, to shield as many of her small

charges as possible from the destruction.

The fact that she took time, and had time, before she was killed, to gather up the two nearest children in her room, showed to those who found the trio, that she threw away, with a magnificent gesture at death, her possible chance of escaping from the hurtling masonry and bricks that carried her to her death. Gripped tightly to the clothing of the school teacher, tiny hands never relaxed the frantic grip inspired by fear of death.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Saturday 21 May 1927

### **M. S. C. GRADUATE, TEACHER AT BATH SCHOOL, HAS THRILLING MEMORIES**

Miss Evelyn Paul Escaped  
With 7 Pupils To Seek Safety  
In Field

A story of seven little survivors huddled together in the center of a great field a block from the wrecked Bath school from which they had ran in terror was told Saturday by Miss Evelyn Paul, one of the teachers of the fated school, who since the disaster has been at her sorority house at Michigan State college.



MISS EVELYN PAUL



Miss Paul, who graduated from college here a year ago, was instructor in home economics at the Bath Consolidated school. Her home is at Hinsdale, Ill., but she has gone to the Kappa Delta house to rest her shattered nerves and recover from the minor injuries she suffered in the explosion.

Seven of the younger girls were in Miss Paul's room on the first floor of the east wing of the building at the time of the blast. Miss Paul and her little charges escaped from the building through a shattered window, the teacher jumping down first and catching the girls as they climbed from the window above and dropped.

### Hunt Safe Spot

As they ran away from the building, there came the second explosion, the one in Kehoe's car, and they saw the superintendent of schools and two other local residents lying dead and dying. Panic-stricken, with the little girls holding to her skirts and other tiny hands pressed into hers, the teacher did not know in which direction to turn for safety. Behind them was the wrecked school, at the street were the mangled forms of the victims of the second explosion and beyond were flames shooting high in the air from the burning Kehoe homestead.

So the little group made for the vacant field, a block from the present school, which the school board at Bath suggested at its meeting Friday night as the site for the new Bath school, when it is built.

They huddled together in the center of the field, feeling safe only when as far from other buildings as possible. The teacher told

the terrified little survivors to remain where they were. And stay they did, until joyous mothers, notified by the teacher, came to them and clasped them in their arms.

The teacher's order to remain where they were the first words of school discipline to be spoken on the site where Bath youngsters later will probably be attending school. In contrast to the block of horror where the former school was wrecked, it is a block in which first school significance centered round safety and rejoicing. It was a fitting dedication of the proposed new site.

Miss Pearl saw an injured man falter past. Her terror gave way to the nurse instinct in every woman and charging the little flock she had piloted to safety to stay where they were, she rushed back to the scene to notify mothers of the safety of "her" seven and to aid in rescue and first aid.

### Struck By Splinter

Miss Paul declares her recollection was of the deafening blast, the flash she thought was blindness. She gripped her desk through the shower of plaster. A splinter burned itself into her shoulder. Then through the night of horror came a light. It was a window. About her were the seven little girls in terror. They cried "What is it?" over and over as she pushed them to the window, climbed over the ledge, dropped to the ground and told the girls to drop into her arms.

Kehoe, she said, delivered the teacher's checks each month. He would visit the various rooms, and hand out the pay slip. Early always, Miss Paul said, he would remark, rather coldly and

without expression in his voice or on his face, "Well, it's another month."

On 1 October 11927 another 244 sticks, 208 pounds, of bundled dynamite was found hidden in a first-floor partition in the north wing of the remaining Bath school building. Unfortunately, a sightseer, poking in the ruins, located the wired but unexploded package. Police were quickly sent for.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Monday 24 March 1930

Andrew Kehoe's farm has been sold.

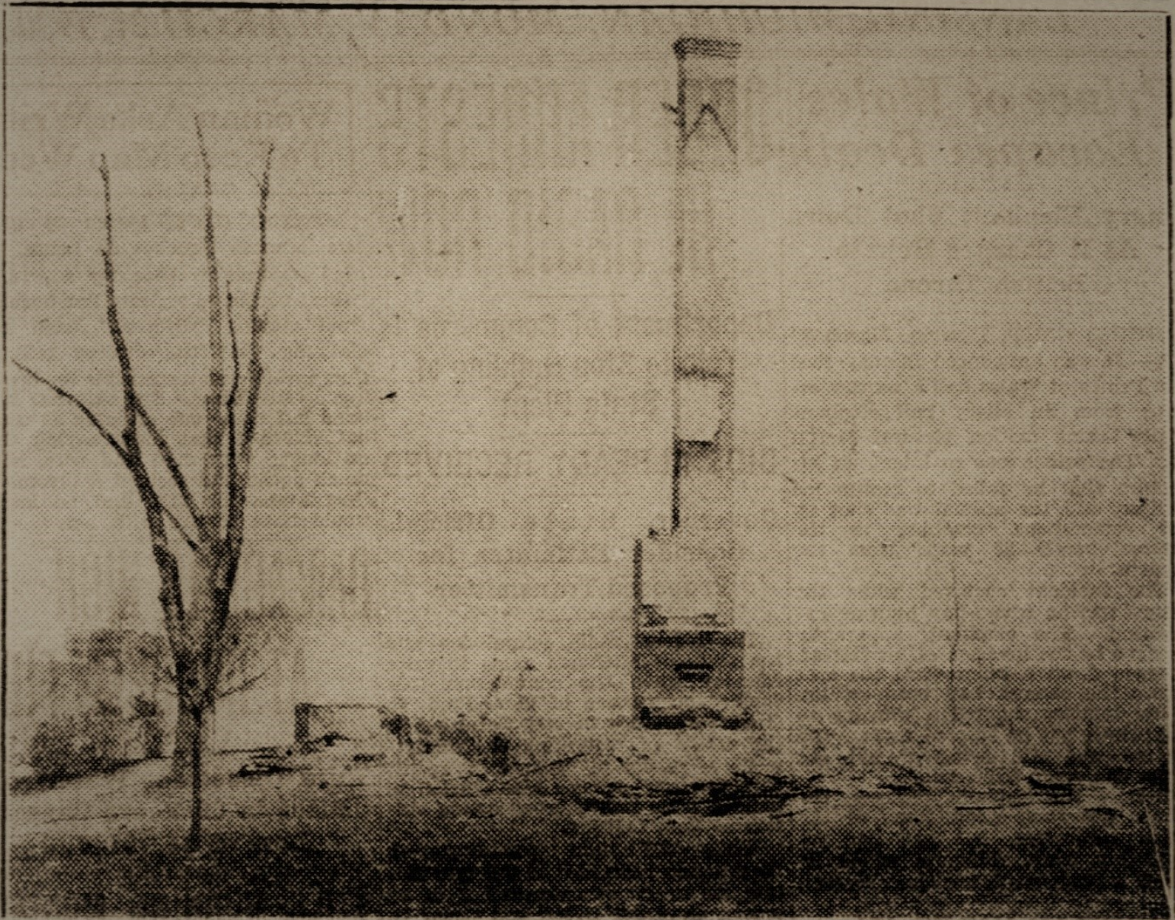
The beautiful 50-acre piece of land near Bath which has been an attraction to the curious since the tragic dynamite disaster at the Bath consolidated school but which, because of rumor that it was planted with dynamite has been shunned by careful people, was sold from the court house steps at St. Johns Saturday. It was bid in by Mrs. Julia A. Price, 1003 Washington avenue, Lansing for \$4,900. Mrs. Price was mortgagee and sister-in-law of Kehoe.

A crumbling chimney and a few trees which resemble those found on the battle fields of France following the great war, now mark the place where once stood a farm house which was the pride of that section of Clinton county. Every building on the farm was burned with the exception of a chicken house which was saved through failure of a slow match. Every tree on the farm was girdled and all the fences were cut. Because of the thoroughness of Kehoe's work it has been feared that he planted explosives in the farm land. Before the sale the entire farm was plowed and plowing failed to reveal wires or explosives.



For a long time following the disaster the farm land was completely deserted. Weeds and wild plant life thrived in the once productive corn field and the clover was nearly choked out by the wild growth. During the past year, passersby have seen a lone herd of sheep wandering about the land.

## Andrew Kehoe Farm Bid In by Mortgagee at Public Sale at Clinton County Courthouse



This is the gaunt and forbidding tower marking the one-time home of Andrew Kehoe, whose crazed brain conceived the idea, two years ago, of blasting the Bath consolidated school, and his own farm house, to right a fancied wrong. When his plan of vengeance

was carried out, the ruins of a school, the death of 44 children and adults and his own wife, were the results. The chimney of his farmhouse remains standing today as a ghastly reminder of the act. The farm property deserted since the blast, was sold Saturday afternoon.

On the day of the Bath disaster Kehoe set fire to his buildings, killed his wife and burned her body and then drove to the school



where he set off a charge of dynamite which he had planted in the building. After watching the blast which took the lives of 43 school children and teachers, he set off a charge of dynamite in the rear of his car which blew him to bits.

### **Blast Made Junk of Kehoe's Car**



*THE REMAINS OF ANDREW KEHOE'S CAR ARE PICTURED HERE SHOWING THE damage done by the charge of dynamite which he had placed and fired himself. This explosion was responsible for the death of Kehoe, Supt. Emery Huyck and other bystanders.*

Very little interest was shown in the sale of the farm. Only a few persons were present when Timothy Clark, circuit court commissioner placed the land on the block.

Ironwood Daily Globe (Ironwood, Michigan) Wednesday 26 March 1930

## **PROPERTY OF MANIAC WRITTEN OFF RECORDS**

St. Johns, Mich., March 26 - The name of Andrew Kehoe, whose maniacal fury led him to destroy the school house at Bath, Mich., killing 45 children, has been written off county records. The 60 acre farm, where he killed his wife and burned and dynamited his house before destroying the school and himself has been sold at auction to satisfy a \$4,900 mortgage and today the farm belongs to Mrs. Julia Price of Lansing, holder of the mortgage, instead of "the estate of Andrew Kehoe."

Kehoe, a member of the school board, committed his ruthless act of destruction on May 18, 1927, killing 45 children and maiming many others for life. He later blew up his automobile, killing himself.

Before the land was sold every foot of it was ploughed to alleviate fears that wires and explosives still might be hidden on it. This fear had made the place one to be avoid ever since the tragedy.

Detroit Free Press (Detroit, Michigan) Sunday 16 May 1937

Ruins of Kehoe's farm buildings remain as they were 10 years ago when he killed his wife and fired his home. Luren W. Van Ostin, a deputy sheriff, bought the property some time after the tragedy when townspeople refused to consider its purchase despite the bargain price at which it was offered.

Rumors persisted for decades that Kehoe planted explosives in and around his farm. Gossip also said Kehoe had been tipped



over the edge of sanity due to his mortgage being called in. He was years behind on payments. Both stories were proven untrue.

The tillable ground around the farm buildings was plowed up before the 1930 sale. Nothing was found. Explosive experts also said that even if Kehoe had planted more dynamite the weather would deteriorate the dynamite to uselessness.

And the actual mortgage on the Kehoe farm was held by the executors of the Lawrence Price estate. Kehoe's had purchased the property off the Price estate in March 1919. A deed was executed March 27, 1919 and the mortgage was \$6,000. Kehoe paid the interest in 1920 and 1921 but did not pay either interest or principal after that. Nellie, one of the heirs of Lawrence Price, received a check for 60% of her legacy in 1925. Later she received another inheritance sum and it was applied, by the estate executors, to the mortgage indebtedness. Kehoe protested the action and a check was issued directly to Nellie. Joseph H. Dunnebacke, one of the executors of the estate, had tried to work with Kehoe and continued to have every confidence in his honesty. Foreclosure was discussed but Nellie's sister, Elizabeth, had urged the executors to give Kehoe more time. Unfortunately, foreclosure papers had been already been drawn up and a deputy sheriff served them. But Dunnebacke always insisted they were going to give Kehoe every chance to make right and were not going to press the issue. The home was considered a fine farmhouse and had long been in the Price family.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Friday 9 May 1969

BATH - For more than 40 years after a crazed farmer dynamited his house, barn, outbuildings and the Bath Consolidated School, the land around his home had lain fallow.

But the land was sold two years ago to a couple of East Lansing businessmen, Clyde O. May and Leo Merten who finally bulldozed in the foundation of the house and began planting crops.

....But May, who bull-dozed in the foundation of the home two years ago, said there was no explosion.

And Nellie? Her ruined body was not found until the next day.

The Pittsburgh Press (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) Friday 20 May 1927

### **MADDYNAMITER'S** (actual spelling used) **WIFE IS BURIED**

Slain Woman, First of Maniac's Victim, Given Interment At Bath

Lansing, Mich., May 20 - The first of a series of funeral services resulting from the maniacal dynamiting of Bath Consolidated school Wednesday took place quietly at St. Mary's Catholic church here today when high mass was conducted for Mrs. Agnes Ellen Kehoe, murdered wife of the man held responsible for a toll of 44 lives.

Meanwhile, between 10 and 20 individual funerals and one or two double ceremonies were to be conducted today in townships bordering on Bath, which had joined the diminutive community for common construction of the school, that was both the cause and the scene of an overwhelming grief.

Services for Mrs. Kehoe, whose body was not found until yesterday were conducted by Rev. Fr. J. W. O'Rafferty, with less than 100 relatives and friends of the deceased attending. It was conducted as quietly as possible, with burial following in Mount Hope cemetery, Lansing.

Fr. O'Rafferty's brief sermon reflected the appalling nature of the tragedy caused by Mrs. Kehoe's husband, Andrew E. Kehoe, disgruntled treasurer of the Bath twp. school board. The sermon contained no direct reference to the disaster, but closed significantly with the simply spoke words:

"Father, forgiven them, for they know not what they do."

As the funeral procession moved into the church and again as it emerged after the ceremony, a near bodily encounter between news photographers and friends of the Kehoe family occurred. Even after the photographers retired to a second-story window across the street from the church, friends of the family entered the structure and protested.

## INJURED GRAVE

The list of injured still confined to hospitals today totaled 38, 26 of whom were at Edward Sparrow hospital, where the condition of four was said to be serious and 12 at St. Lawrence hospital, all reported improved.

Relief agencies appointed by Governor Fred W. Green to aid in rehabilitating the damage wrought at Bath were busy today perfecting their organizations and receiving first contributions of



funds. The Lansing Old School boys' club donated \$500 to equip a room at one of the hospitals in memory of the victims.

Officials of the state fire marshal's division, who late yesterday completed a secret investigation into the cause of the explosion, announced their findings today, expressing preliminary satisfaction that Kehoe, and Kehoe alone, was responsible for the disaster.

Charles V. Lane, deputy fire marshal, said that S. J. Howell, Kehoe's closest friend, proved the most important witness, saying he and his two sons rushed by automobile to the Kehoe farm when they saw it in flames.

The Evening Journal (Wilmington, Delaware) Friday 20 May 1927

LANSING, Mich., May 20 - The first of a sorrowful series of funerals resulting from the dynamiting of Bath Consolidated School Wednesday occurred at St. Mary's Catholic Church here today when high mass was sung for Mrs. Agnes Ellen Kehoe, murdered wife of the man held responsible for a toll of 44 lives.

Meanwhile, between 10 and 20 individual funerals and one or two double ceremonies were being held today in townships bordering Bath, which had joined this small community for common construction of the school that was both the cause and the scene of an overwhelming grief.

Services for Mrs. Kehoe, whose body was not found until yesterday, were conducted by the Rev. Father J. W. O'Rafferty, with less than 100 relatives and friends of Mrs. Kehoe attending.

It was conducted as quietly as possible with burial following in Mr. Hope cemetery, Lansing.

Agnes Ellen "Nellie" Price, daughter of Patrick (1848-1920) and Mary Ann (Wilson) (1850-1892) Price, was born 23 August 1875 Zilwaukee, Saginaw County, Michigan. Nellie's first names, "Agnes Ellen", were recorded as such on her Michigan death certificate.

The Price family consisted of 6 girls and 1 boy. The 1880 US Federal Census enumerated the family living at Bath, Clinton County. This may be the same home in which Nellie died 47 years later. Nellie lived with widowed father and siblings until her marriage 14 May 1912 Lansing, Ingham County, Michigan, to Andrew Phillip Kehoe.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Tuesday 14 May 1912

Miss Ellen Price, daughter of Mr. Patrick Price, 1114 Seymour St. and Mr. Andrew Kehoe of Tecumseh were married Tuesday morning at St. Mary's church, Fr. L. I. Brancheau officiating. After the ceremony a wedding breakfast was served at the home of the bride's father. Mr. and Mrs. Kehoe will be at home after June 15 in Tecumseh.

The first years of her marriage with Andrew were uneventful. They lived in the Tecumseh, Lenawee County, Michigan area for about 6 years and then moved to the Bath home and farm in 1919. Nellie and Andrew had no children but during the last few years of their marriage Nellie's health deteriorated. She was reported to have tuberculosis.

Nellie's family claimed her charred remains and she was quietly interred near her parents in Mt. Hope Cemetery, Lansing, Ingham County. Later accounts of the funeral spoke of the circus like atmosphere and the constant flashing of camera bulbs before and after the service at St. Mary's Church. This was a far-cry different from Nellie's quiet wedding in the same church 15 years previous.

And Kehoe's victim list continued to mount. Beatrice Pearl Gibbs, daughter of Frank John and Elda Pearl (Hunt) Gibbs, was born 17 May 1917. Beatrice was a 4th grader at Bath. Her broken body was transported to St. Lawrence Hospital where she succumbed 3 months later to persistent infection during a surgery on a leg.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Tuesday 23 August 1927

## **BLAST CLAIMS 45H VICTIM**

### **Beatrice Gibbs Dies After 3 Months Fight Against Bath Injuries**

All the horror and pathos of the Bath disaster recast its shadow over the St. Lawrence hospital Monday afternoon when the spirit of 10-year-old Beatrice Gibbs, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John F. Gibbs, gave up its three months' struggle with an infected limb and quietly slipped away.

Beatrice was brought into the hospital on the morning of May 18 with compound fractures of both legs and an arm, received when the blast of dynamite, set by Andrew Kehoe, hurtled her into the ruins of the Bath consolidated schools. She was one of 40 rushed to Lansing Hospitals from the scene of the explosion.

At first it was thought that Beatrice would recover. Two of the fractures healed properly. The third one was stubborn and developed an infection. For 12 weeks, the fair-haired mite fought her losing fight with courage and with cheerfulness. Her strength ebbed slowly and Monday afternoon she faded into the beyond.

Beatrice is the 45th and probably the final victim of the mental twist which caused the crazed Clinton county farmer to destroy his own farm buildings, and the Bath school in protest against the school board's fancied extravagance. She is the only patient to be lost in either hospital since the first week of the tragedy. Perry Harte and Anna Brask remain at the Sparrow hospital but both will be released shortly.

The funeral will be held Thursday morning, at 10 o'clock, at the home of Arthur Schooltz, 917 N. Pennsylvania avenue, with Rev. McDonald, of the Bath Methodist church officiating. Interment will be at Chesaning.

One brother, J. D. Gibbs, of Bath, and the grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Hunt of Chesaning and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gibbs of Bath, survive her, in addition to her parents.

Beatrice was interred Wildwood Cemetery, Chesaning Township, Saginaw County, Michigan. She was not the last to succumb to injuries.

Richard A. Fritz, son of Francis M. and Fern Mary (Warden) Fritz, was born 18 May 1919. Richard was a 2nd grader at Bath. Although the official death certificate listed myocarditis as the cause of death, he actually succumbed from the lingering injuries his tiny body sustained in the explosion. He died 10 May 1928 a



few days less than a year after he was injured. Richard was interred Mr. Hope Cemetery, Lansing.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Friday 11 May 1928

### **RICHARD A. FRITZ**

Richard A. Fritz, 8, son of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Fritz, died Thursday evening at the home near Bath. Besides the parents, he is survived by one brother, Charles Max Fritz, and one sister, Norma Jean Fritz, two grandmothers, Mrs. Minnie Haifley of Lafayette, Ind., and Mrs. E. L. Machin of Owosso. The boy was taken to Jarvis-Estes Funeral home where funeral services will be held Monday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock, with Rev. McDonald of Bath officiating. Interment will be in Mt. Hope cemetery.

And the community began to move on...

The Times Herald (Port Huron, Michigan) Saturday 18 August 1928

### **SCHOOL SACRED TO CHILDHOOD'S MEMORY OPENS**

Structure Dedicated In Bath Replaces One In Which 40 Children Perished

Bath, Aug. 18 - This village today stepped from the web of grief spun by demented Andrew Kehoe more than a year ago to accept a symbol of reconstruction and good cheer.

It was dedication day - marking the completion of a peaceful monument upon the site of a terrible tragedy. The James Couzens agricultural school, spic and span and new has obliterated the gaping hole and piled wreckage left by Kehoe

when his cunningly planned dynamite blast sent 44 persons, most of them school children, to eternity because he thought "taxes were too high." The structure was presented to the villagers by Senator James Couzens, but the donor was not expected to be present in person. Senator Couzens informed friends he feared a formal dedication might revive poignant sorrows. He preferred to have his gift received simply, he said. With it went a message of tenderness from the entire state to further assuage the wounds, which perhaps have healed over but can never be cured. Governor Green, for similar reasons, planned to stay away.

### Pictures of Childhood

The school is more than a modern educational institution. In a niche in the entrance hall stands a bronze statue of a child carrying a kitten in its arms. A picture of innocence typifying those Kehoe selected as his victims. School children in every part of the state sent in their meager contributions to make possible this mark of remembrance. Bronze plaques list the names of the tots who died because of Kehoe's fiendish whim. Others express the gratitude of the community toward the people of the state who rushed forward, almost as a unit, to offer their services when death pointed its sudden finger at so many homes.

The school, for which Senator Couzens gave \$70,000, and which was completed for slightly more than that amount, was thrown open this morning. Contractors who erected the building, architects who designed it, companies which furnished materials all gave of their time and resources to make the structure possible. For weeks after the blast which wrecked its predecessor

the stricken villagers could not decide whether a new school should be built on the site of the tragedy. Finally, it was determined no greater mark of affection and remembrance could be offered than to place it upon the soil where their children died.

The building is two stories of brick. It has commodious classrooms, a gymnasium and other features of modern educational institutions which were lacking in the school Kehoe destroyed. The children of the village and the surrounding country will attend classes in it this year. During the last school year, they studied where they could - in store rooms, the town hall and a church basement.

The homecoming exercises, the games and the picnic effect lent by the thanksgiving nature of the occasion lasted throughout the morning. In the afternoon Prof. L. L. Tyler, of Albion college, was to present the plaques and E. E. Gallup, of the state department of public instruction was to speak.

After the exercises, a program of sports and forgetfulness was programmed, with a ball game and a home talent play offered by High school students.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Saturday 18 August 1928

But perhaps the most pitiful thing about Bath's celebration Saturday was the several small child cripples who were forced to sit and watch. Living memories of the wrath of crazy Andrew Kehoe, they brought poignant recollections of Bath's day of terror.

10 Years Later:

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Friday 19 March 1937

## **HORRORS OF BATH DISASTER RECALLED BY TEXAS TRAGEDY**

The horror and tragedy of the school explosion at New London, Tex., which claimed the lives of hundreds of children, struck a sympathetic chord Friday in the hearts of residents of this vicinity who vividly recalled the Bath school disaster a decade ago in which 44 persons, mostly children, lost their lives and more than 50 others were injured.



While the Texas catastrophe was accidental in nature, the explosion at Bath was premeditated - the fiendish act of a crazed Clinton county farmer, Andrew Kehoe, who devised a diabolical plot to wreck the school for which he was treasurer, to gain revenge for the foreclosure of a mortgage on his farm due, he felt, to the burden of heavy school taxes.

On the morning of May 18, 1927 while 260 children were assembled in the school, a terrific blast shook the village of Bath, wrecking the north wing of the school. The roof caved in and the walls crumbled - moans and screams of agony and terror rent the air; mothers fled from their homes and fathers hurried to the



scene of disaster from farmland or workshop. The black wings of death shadowed the tragedy-stunned village.

### KILLED SELF AND WIFE

Self-destruction was also included in Kehoe's mad scheme. A few minutes following the school explosion, he and Emory E. Huyck, superintendent of school, were blown to bits and two bystanders were fatally hurt. Huyck had been summoned to Kehoe's car in which the murderous school board member sat. Kehoe had a quantity of explosives in the car, which he set off with a bullet from his gun as he talked with the school head.

Not even Kehoe's wife escaped his vengeance. Thirteen minutes before the school explosion, the Kehoe farm, located a mile west of Bath, had been shaken by a blast which destroyed the barn, house and a wagon shed, and either killed Mrs. Kehoe or concealed evidence of her earlier murder.

Doctors, nurses, and anyone else who thought he could be of service, rushed to Bath from Lansing and all other cities in this section of Michigan. Emergency hospitals were quickly erected to treat the injured and morgues were improvised to house the mangled bodies of the dead. Scores of injured children were carried to cars and rushed here to St. Lawrence and Sparrow hospitals, where many of them remained for months.

### Bath Shudders in Sympathy

Hearing news of the Texas disaster Friday, residents of Bath recalled with shuddering sorrow their own bitter tragedy.

Most of the children now attending the rebuilt Bath school, constructed with funds donated by the late Senator James Couzens, are not old enough to remember the explosion. A bronze statue of a small girl with gay, laughing eyes - a memorial to the youngsters killed in the disaster - is now the village's only concrete reminder of its "day of horror."

24 Years Later:

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Sunday 13 May 1951

Bath, May 12 - Twenty-four years ago next Friday one of the most fiendish crimes in history was committed in this quiet Clinton county community.

On May 18, 1926, the happy voices of little children were turned to screams of pain and death when a terrific explosion destroyed a large portion of the Bath Consolidated school.

The blast was planned and set off by a crazed farmer who had worked out a scheme to destroy the entire community. His name was Andrew P. Kehoe.

The tragedy took 46 lives and injured 58 others. There were 38 children among the victims along with the school superintendent and two teachers.

They Tried to Forget

For years after the disaster the people here were reluctant to talk about it. Every family in the community and surrounding area had lost loved ones, and some families lost more than one. Every

time someone mentioned the school explosion, those who knew about it turned away and said nothing.

Today the children of those who survived the tragedy are attending the Bath school, now known as the James Couzens Agricultural school, and most of them know very little about the crime. Newcomers in Bath have heard about it, but few know the details.

There were 314 children enrolled in the school at the time of the disaster. Today the rebuilt and enlarged school has 627 pupils and is over-crowded.

A local business man who was a pupil in the school in 1927 recalls that school buses brought most of the children to school at the regular time, but many were not there because they were exempt from their final examinations. The day was perfect with its spring freshness and the sun was shining bright.

Recess came and many of the children ran outdoors to romp and play. Little did they realize that within a half hour many of them would be dead or injured. The bell rang and everyone was busy in their classrooms at 9:45 a.m. when a terrific crash was heard and the building started falling. Those who reached safety first helped others from the building. No one could imagine what had caused the explosion. From every direction people came. Mothers in aprons and fathers from their stores and shops.

Soon ambulances, doctors, nurses, police and firemen came from Lansing and other communities. The injured were rushed to hospital and the dead were lined up on the school lawn where frantic parents and relatives identified them.

## Car Blast Kills More

For a long time, no one knew what had caused the blast. About 30 minutes after the school explosion Kehoe drove his car up in front of the school. The school superintendent, Emery E. Huyck, Postmaster Glenn Smith and a farmer, Nelson McFarren, went to Kehoe's car. Just then the car was blown to bits. Huyck and McFarren were killed outright and Smith's leg was blown off. He died before they could remove him from the grounds. Kehoe's body was blown to bits.

Even after this blast the people did not know what had happened. Before he died, Smith said, "leave me boys and run, these trees are full of it." He must have thought the blast came out of the trees.

It was soon reported that Kehoe's farm home and barn were burning. The next day the remains of Mrs. Kehoe were found on a sheep cart that was burned near the barn. She apparently had been murdered on the previous day.

## Story Pieced Together

Slowly the story of how Kehoe planned the fantastic mass murder and the destruction of every living thing around his own farm and in the community, was unraveled.

Firemen and state police recovered more than 500 pounds of unexploded dynamite in the school basement. They said if the caps had set off the blast as planned, the village of Bath would have been destroyed.



Kehoe had apparently planned the crime for a period of two years - from the time he was defeated for re-election as township clerk, in the spring of 1926, an office he had been appointed to in 1925. He was defeated due to continuous trouble he had caused as a member of the school board.

The school had been bothered with bees in the winter of 1925-1926 and Kehoe volunteered to get rid of them. The job was turned over to him and the bees were eliminated. During the summer vacation months of 1926 Kehoe did some repairing and rewiring which gave him free access to the school. This is probably when he planned and did a lot of his fiendish work.

#### Planned Utter Destruction

It was revealed in the investigation that followed the school blast that Kehoe planned on destroying everything. He cut the wire fences on the farm and put dynamite in his tractor so that it blew all to pieces while the tool shed was burning. His only stock was two horses. They were tied in the barn and their feet were wired together so that recuing them during the fire would be impossible.

Mr. Kehoe carried all the rails and lumber on the farm into the tool shed so it would be destroyed. He girdled all the small shade trees and sawed the grape vines off next to the ground and set them back on the stumps so that they would not be noticed.

Kehoe even had a sign on this fence which read, "Criminals are made, not born."

As the story was pieced together, authorities learned how Kehoe loaded his automobile with burrs, bolts, scrap iron, drag teeth, rifle shells and dynamite. When he exploded his car in front of the school, the junk flew in all directions injuring many besides those who were killed.

One of those injured by the blast of Kehoe's car was Perry Hart whose heel was blown off. He now lives in Laingsburg and is still suffering from the injury which has caused him to make regular trips to the hospital at Ann Arbor for the past 24 years. Perry Hart lost two sisters and a brother in the explosion.

The victims of this crime are buried in 12 cemeteries at St. Johns, Bath, DeWitt, Perry, Belding, Dimondale, Springport, Laingsburg, Okemos, Chesaning and Gunnisonville.

All of Michigan came to the aid of the stricken community. Inside the new school today one finds a bronze plaque which reads, "The rebuilding and enlarging of this school was realized through the gift of Sen. James Couzens and the voluntary services of architects, contractors, sub-contractors and relief committees."

Taisto Filppula has been superintendent of the James Couzens school for the past three years and even he has learned but few details of the tragedy. He declared that the element of safety is foremost in the minds of the students and the school board members, all of whom are aware of a great tragedy that snuffed out the lives of so many 24 years ago.

40 Years Later:

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Friday 9 May 1969

Bath - For more than 40 years after a crazed farmer dynamited his house, barn, outbuildings and the Bath Consolidated School, the land around his home had lain fallow.

But the land was sold two years ago to a couple of East Lansing businessmen, Clyde O. May and Leo Merten, who finally bulldozed in the foundation of the house and began planting crops.

Final examinations of 314 children in the Bath School were interrupted at 9:45 a.m., Wednesday, May 18, 1927, when an explosion destroyed almost half of the school building.

Workmen later separated the bodies of 38 children and two teachers from the debris.

Shortly after the school building exploded, the farm buildings of Andrew Kehoe blew up. The body of Mrs. Nellie Kehoe was found in the wreckage.

## MORE DEATHS

Within a half hour of the school blast, Kehoe drove back to the school his car loaded with bolts, scrap iron, drag teeth, rifle shells and dynamite.

As Emery E. Huyck, the school superintendent, Postmaster Glenn Smith and a farmer, Nelson McFarren, approached Kehoe's car it too exploded.

Kehoe, Huyck and McFerrin were killed instantly. Smith died seconds later.

Shortly after the police pieced together the entire story of how Kehoe planned the destruction of the school. Readers of the State Journal that afternoon learned almost the full story.

Work on clearing the debris was halted for a while as state police removed more than 500 pounds of unexploded dynamite from the other half of the school building. Police said at the time that if all the dynamite Kehoe planted in the school went off, the entire village of Bath would have been obliterated.

For years people refused to enter the Kehoe farm. They feared Kehoe had booby-trapped his farm and believed intruders would be killed if hidden dynamite exploded.

But May, who bull-dozed in the foundation of the house two years ago, said there was no explosion.

## TOLD STORY

Authorities said dynamite planted in 1927 would be safe shortly after because of the wear of the weather.

May and Merten employ farm workers to grow corn on the field which used to bear Kehoe's farm

Bath residents interrupted his work on the foundation to tell him the story of the school explosion, May said. He had heard of it himself earlier, he said.

In addition to the dead, 58 persons were injured in the blast.

Those who escaped from the building without injury later returned to care for the injured.



School grounds became a morgue as parents searched for bodies of their children.

At the time of the explosion, Kehoe was treasurer of the Bath School District. He was reportedly angry with school consolidation because it raised taxes. Kehoe himself had not children.

Kehoe had apparently planned the crime for two years, from the time he was defeated in his bid for re-election as township clerk in 1926. He had been appointed to fill a vacancy in that position the year before.

The school had been bothered with bees in the winter of 1925-1926 and Kehoe volunteered to get rid of them. He did. During the summer vacation months, in 1926, Kehoe did some repair work for the school, free of charge.

But all that work gave him free access to the school building. Police theorized that Kehoe placed his charges and fuses in the building while working on the building. Kehoe had studied electrical engineering for a year at Michigan Agricultural College.

All of Michigan came to the aid of the stricken community. U.S. Sen. James Couzens, who became rich through the automobile industry, donated the funds needed to rebuild the school. It was renamed in his honor.

Andrew Phillip Kehoe, son of Phillip (1833-1915) and Mary (McGovern) (1835-1890) Kehoe, was born 1 February 1877, died by his own hand 18 May 1927. His sister, Miss Agnes Kehoe, of Battle Creek, went to St. Johns and made the arrangements for

Andrew's burial in Mount Rest Cemetery, St. Johns, Clinton County. There were no services and no headstone was ever placed on the grave.

Another Kehoe sister, Rose, was quoted in 1927 as saying, "About 16 or 16 years ago Andrew fell while attending an electrical school at St. Louis. He was semi-conscious for two months. From St. Louis, he went to Bath eight years ago and located on the farm. While working on some wood land on the farm he was struck by a falling tree, receiving a severe scalp wound."

## *Revised List of Bath Dead*

Bath, Mich., May 19.—The following revised list of dead in the Bath school disaster was released here by Prosecutor William C. Searl, of Clinton county, late this afternoon:

Emory E. Huyck, 30, superintendent of schools.

Andrew Kehoe, 50, farmer and school board member.

Nelson McFarren, 70, farmer.

Glenn Smith, 35, postmaster.

Hazel Weatherby, 40, teacher, Howard City.

Robert Hart, 9, son of Laverne Hart.

Floyd Zimmerman, 12, and George Zimmerman, 9, stepsons of James Dalton.

George Hall, Jr., 8, and Willa Hall, 11, son and daughter of George Hall.

Elizabeth Witchell, 8, daughter of Roscoe Witchell.

Lucile Witchell, 10, daughter of Ray Witchell.

Richard Richardson, 13, son of Guy Richardson.

Floyd Burnett, 12, son of George Burnett.

Henry Bergan, 14, son of Rudolph Bergan.

Loren Hunter, 14, son of William G. Hunter.

Marjorie Fritz, 6, daughter of Francis Fritz.

Ewing, 11, son of Simon E. Ewing.

Doris Elaine Johns, 8, daughter of Ira Johns.

Stanley Harte, 11, son of Maud Harte.

Robert Bromund, 12, and Amelia, 11, son and daughter of Rudolph Bromund.

Ralph Cushman, 7, son of Albert Cushman.

Thelma McDonald, 7, daughter of Scott McDonald.

Robert Cochran, 8, son of Frank Cochran.

Arnold Bauerle, 8, son of Henry Bauerle.

Clarence McFarren, 13, son of Wendell McFarren.

Galen Harte, 13, son of Octa Harte.

Elsie Robb, 11, daughter of Samuel Robb.

Lemoyne Woodman, 8, son of Harold Woodman.

Iola Hart, 12, Vivian, 9, Percy, 11, son and daughters of Eugene Hart.

Carlisle Geisenhauer, son of Walter Geisenhauer.

Catherine Foote, 11, daughter of Daniel Foote.

Russell Chapman, 11, son of Clarence Chapman.

Pauline Shirtz, 12, daughter of P. J. Shirtz.

Emma Nichols, 12, daughter of Henry Nichols.

Emerson Metcalf, 9, son of James Metcalf.



90 Years Later:

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Friday 17 May 2017

# Remembering the Bath explosion



LSJ FILE

A disgruntled taxpayer, Andrew Kehoe, set off 500 pounds of dynamite he had planted inside the Bath schoolhouse on May 18, 1927. The bombing killed 45 people — including 38 children. It remains the most deadly act of school violence in U.S. history.

## It remains the deadliest act of school violence in U.S. history



**JUDY PUTNAM**  
LOCAL COLUMNIST

**BATH TWP.** — Ken Church, 45, is an eighth-generation Bath resident.

He grew up in the small town where a May 18, 1927 school bombing and truck explosion killed 38 children, just before the start of summer vacation. Even with such horrific modern-day mass shootings as Sandy Hook, Columbine and Virginia Tech, the Bath School disaster remains the most deadly act of school violence in U.S. history.

As a child, Church recalls walking a few blocks to his grandmother's house each day after school. Along the way, he passed the spot — now a park — where the Bath Consolidated School's north wing

blew up, the act of Andrew Kehoe, a school board treasurer.

Kehoe left behind a stenciled sign on his farm fence that read "Criminals are made, not born." He was angry about paying higher taxes for the school and losing a bid to become town clerk. Back then, consolidated schools were a new idea to replace old-fashioned one-room schoolhouses.

But it wasn't until Church was in high school, and after his grandmother died, that he learned she had been in the school the day of the timer-activated explosion. So was her future husband, Church's grandfather, and several of their siblings.

Church's grandmother, Florence King Schoals, never talked about it.

See PUTNAM, Page 13A