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## Hayride Wagon Overtakes, Youth Crushed to Death



**HAYRIDE TRAGEDY SCENE** — Neighbors and passersby stop along the Baker Hollow Road about eight miles west of Columbus to look in the morning's light at the overturned farm wagon from which a group of teenagers was spilled Friday night on a hayride during a party at a nearby "hooch" shed. One died and several were hospitalized with injuries. An abandoned tractor towing the wagon was headed down the slight hill in the background and into a curve where it broke off the metal guardrail and upset in standing water. Looking on, from left, are Steve Shroy, a neighbor beside the scene and son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Shroy Jr.; Mark Smith, son of Judy Kinast of Bethany Road who was visiting the Shroy family; Mike Shroy, and Claude Berrie, a passerby from the Columbus-Wayne Township Road. (Staff Photo)

### Tractor Coasting in Neutral

## Hayride Host Tells of Upset

His left eye lay in Friday's hayride accident that killed another teenager, 19-year-old Dennis Simpson told The Republic Monday from his hospital bed how he tried to turn a coasting tractor and avoid its tip into a creek west of Columbus on Baker Hollow Road.

Simpson said the tractor's driver, Douglas Bean, 14, shifted the automatic transmission into neutral and was coasting down a long hill returning to Bartholomew County for a neighborhood Halloween party at a revamp hog house about three miles west of the Doweil Hill.

"He wasn't strong enough to turn the steering wheel, and he jumped off," said Simpson.

"Eddie and I were trying to get from the wagon up to the tractor and turn the wheel before it wrecked. There's no way to shift back to a drive gear unless the tractor comes to a dead stop."

"If I had known he was going to jump I wouldn't have asked him to bring the tractor."

"Eddie" was Eddie Perkins, 14, who died when hit by one tractor wheel as it broke through a culvert guard rail and overturned in the stream.

Simpson, who works for Trojan Powder Co. at Stony Lea Junction, said he had a "hooch" party at St. Vincent's Hospital in Indianapolis after Saturday's surgical effort failed to have his eye but he answered the telephone himself this morning and said he expected to be in the hospital only two weeks.

Fair conditions also was the report on four of five other injured neighborhood teenagers who remained in Bartholomew County Hospital in Columbus.

Of the injured group, only Donna Conrad, 14, was released Sunday.

Others at the hospital with their major injuries:

- Charles Simpson, 18, sister of Dennis, laid on Second Floor North with back injury.
- Mary (Cathy) Berger, 17, laid on First Floor West, three fractures of her pelvis.
- Patty Perkins, 11, laid on Second Floor North, broken collar bone and mouth injury.
- Steve Perkins, 21, a Verco Corp. employee, fair on First Floor West with back injury.

Simpson said the Halloween party was arranged by him and his sister with Eddie and Steve Perkins. They invited friends in the neighborhood on Baker Hollow and Georgetown Roads, a

community about eight miles west of Columbus. Although Bean reportedly told Sheriff Jimmie L. McKinney that a "church group" was involved, Simpson said none was.

Simpson said the group had worked five weeks preparing a party site in a former hog house located on the property of his mother, Goldie Simpson, near the home of his brother, Don Weekley.

The culvert where the accident occurred is at the entrance to a part-time residence owned by Carl Williams, a Columbus realty agent.

Neighbors reported beer in cans, a broken cooler and a sack were hidden after the accident and recovered later.

Sheriff McKinney said the tractor, owned by the Beans' parents, was impounded after it was pulled from the creek, about 11:30 a.m. Saturday. He said it is being checked to determine if the brakes had failed as Bean had said.

The sheriff was not aware of Simpson's observation about the shifting of gears in the transmission. Passengers on the hay wagon had reported Beans jabbing at the brakes.

Bean was given a blood-alco-

hol test and "passed" with a rating of 55, according to Sheriff McKinney. He said that rating indicated the boy had one or two beers. Bean was charged with illegal consumption of alcoholic beverages and released to the custody of his mother.

Perkins was born July 5, 1962 in Bartholomew County to Doris and Charles E. Perkins. He attended Anasita Friends Church and was a member at Columbus North High School.

Survivors include the mother and stepfather, Doris and Gilda Dolarhilde of Route 5, the father and stepmother, Charles and Alta Perkins of Elizabethtown, grandparents, Mary O. Powers of Fairington Apartments and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Perkins of Anasita, three sisters, Wanda Sue Perkins of Elizabethtown route 1 and Mary Elizabeth and Patty Perkins, both of Route 5; a half sister, Pamela Walker of Lumberton, Mich.; a half brother, Randy A. Perkins of Elizabethtown; three stepbrothers, Steven, Alvin and Roger Dolarhilde, all of Route 5; two stepaunties, Lorena Dolarhilde of Route 5 and Thelma Actis of Elizabethtown route 1; and several aunts and uncles.

low Road east of Road 800W. One of the victims told police that while on Bean pumping the brakes trying to halt the tractor. She said Bean turned and yelled for everyone to jump but that it was too late for some.

The tractor and wagon continued down the hill until they came to a curve and a bridge over a ravine, police said. The tractor came to rest on its side in about 100 feet of water.

Passengers and hay were scattered on the tractor and wagon left the road. The tractor came to rest on its side in about 100 feet of water.

Sheriff Jimmie L. McKinney said he was one of the first to arrive at the scene, followed by the Harrison Township Volunteer Fire Department. The volunteers began to set up floodlights to rescue operations.

The tractor was being driven by Douglas Bean, 14, Route 5. He was arrested and charged with illegal consumption of alcohol and later was released to custody of his mother.

Bean told police he was returning the tractor to the starting point at about 7:30 p.m. when the brakes on the tractor gave way. The tractor started picking up speed as it traveled down a long hill on Baker Hill

### NVHS Grad Cancer Victim

## Death Tied to Radiation?

Two years of exposure to radioactive material in the American Embassy in Moscow may have contributed to the death Saturday of a 29-year-old former North Vernon resident.

I. Gordon Shouse, Annapolis, Md., died at General Hospital in Annapolis of cancer. He was a 1962 graduate of North Vernon High School.

Shouse and his wife, Elaine, were among eight American couples who spent 1971 to 1973 in Moscow as representatives of the State Department.

Lawrence Helle, president of the American Foreign Service Association, State Department, told The Republic today that while Shouse and his wife were living in the Embassy, microwave radiation was being directed at the building by the Soviets.

"Some believe that the microwave radiation causes cancer or a blood abnormality," Helle said. "Some people who have been exposed to the embassy have developed cancer."

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making a check to locate all the persons supposed to be on the party. He and Carter Jackson, Harrison volunteer, found Perkins beneath the tractor. Wreckers were called in to lift the vehicle as the boy could be saved from the wreckage.

One man was arrested at the scene of the accident for disorderly conduct and on a preliminary charge of interfering with a police officer. McKinney said Jack Coltrager, 40, Route 4, uncle of the tractor driver, became upset when he came on the scene.

"He ran down the bank of the ravine and hit Carter Jackson from behind, knocking him into the creek," McKinney said. He said several officers and bystanders tried to wrestle the man down so he could be placed into custody. Coltrager was being held without bond at Bartholomew County Jail this morning.

McKinney said Bean had told the party before the hayride began that he had no accident insurance.

Perkins was born Jan. 5, 1960, and was a sophomore at Columbus North High School. Among survivors are his parents, Charles E. Perkins Sr. of Elizabethtown and Doris Dolarhilde of Route 5.

Dangerous Trailers.Org & Dangerous Hayrides.Org Another Forgotten Death The Columbus Herald Columbus Indiana November 3, 1978

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