

1855



2005

A day in Flint History



1953: Beecher tornado deals death and destruction

Sgt. Vincent F. Neering, commander of the Flint state police post, drove into the Beecher district north of Flint about 8:45 p.m. on June 8, 1953, to investigate a report of a traffic accident. He found two cars blown off the road and then was confronted by a nightmare. In the darkness, he could see trees blown down across Coldwater Road and gradually he became aware of the devastation ahead of him. A tornado had struck just before 8:30 p.m. Its fury lasted only a few moments, but in those

moments, 116 people, many of them children, were killed immediately or fatally injured. More than 900 others were injured. In the last weekend of August, the community came together for "Operation Tornado," a mammoth project to rebuild 193 homes. The origin of this project centered on the Rev. Henry W. Berkemeier, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Many of his parishioners were among the victims.

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Source: Centennial Picture History of Flint