

(Handwritten date: Monday, March 25, 1940)

## AUTO SMASHES INTO AMISH RIG NEAR TOWN EARLY SUNDAY EVENING

Jacob M. Schwartz, 16, and His Sister Katherine, 21, Were Almost Instantly Killed on U.S. Road 27

Two young Amish, Jacob M. Schwartz, 16, and his sister, Katherine M. Schwartz, 21, of northeast of town were killed almost instantly at 7:30 o'clock last evening when an Amish rig in which they were riding was struck by an automobile on U.S. road 27 three and three-fourth miles north of town. Their cousin, Daniel M. Schwartz, and the boyfriend of Miss Schwartz, at the reins, escaped with minor injuries.

Harry Roth, 19, of north of town and a son of the late Jacob Roth, whose wrecked auto was in the ditch near the shattered buggy, was being held for investigation last night and today. Authorities, including Sheriff Ed Miller, state policeman Russell Prior and Coroner Jerome J. Yager, quoted the young man as saying that another driver who did not stop, hit the buggy and that he himself wrecked his own auto to keep from striking the demolished conveyance. The sheriff said the buggy had lights. A blinding snow storm was attributed as a contributing cause.

Katherine, whose body was found under the vehicle, sustained a broken neck and a fracture of the skull at the base of the brain.

Jacob, her brother, who was found nearby, had a fractured skull and crushed chest. Both were dead when the Yager ambulance reached the scene a short time after the accident happened.

Daniel, 23, son of John L. Schwartz, of Nappanee, Indiana, and an employe of his uncle, David L. Schwartz, in the blacksmith shop north of town, escaped in some inexplorable manner. He is a grandson of Bishop and Mrs. Joseph A. Schwartz. He was thrown clear of the rig and under the horse.

The fatal accident took place just a little south of the David L. Schwartz home and soon attracted a large number of persons.

### HOLD HARRY ROTH

Investigation by authorities of the auto driven by Roth and owned by his brother, Loren, indicated that it probably struck the vehicle occupied by the Amish people. The badly damaged auto was towed into Jefferson Garage here. They said that the rig was equipped with lights and that the horse was badly injured. The horse was still alive today.

The Amish buggy, traveling south, was struck from the rear and was overturned on the west side of the road in the ditch. The girl was buried under the wreckage. The auto driven by Roth also was traveling south at a speed estimated by Mr. Roth last evening as at about 50 miles per hour.

The two bodies were removed to the Yager mortuary soon after the accident and this afternoon at 1 o'clock were taken to the parental home northeast of town. The home is located four and one-half miles north and one and one-half miles east of here.

### FUNERAL WEDNESDAY A.M.

The double funeral will be held at the home at 9 o'clock Wednesday morning. It had not been definitely decided today who would conduct the rites. Burial will be in the Schwartz cemetery on the Daniel L. Schwartz farm.

Parents of the deceased brother and sister stated that the trio left (cut off)

Officers today continued their investigation and Coroner Yager took the following statements from the driver of the auto and the driver of the Amish rig.

### ROTH'S STATEMENT

Mr. Roth stated, "About 7:30 o'clock I was driving south on U.S. road 27 from my mother's home to Berne. It was dark and it was snowing and the road was slippery. My lights were burning on bright and suddenly I noticed a car ahead of me which I thought was the tail lights of an auto. The car

pulled over towards the center of the road and then I noticed his stop lights. Then I pulled over towards the center of the road in order to get around the other car because my car seemed to be sliding and I couldn't stop. After I started sliding I thought my car hit the other car and after the crash my car went to the east side of the road and headed for the ditch. According to the investigation which the state police, sheriff and coroner, namely, Russell Prior, Ed Miller and Jerome Yager found, it may and must have been my car which hit the buggy and which I first thought to be another car."

No charges had been preferred at 2:00 p.m. today, but he was still held for further investigation. No one was riding in the car with Roth.

DANIEL M. SCHWARTZ SAYS

At 7:35 p.m. I was driving my buggy south on U.S. road 27. I had with me Katherine M. and Jacob M. Schwartz. The road was slippery and covered with snow and a light snow fell at the time. I had both tail lights burning on the rig with the left hand side light red and the right hand side green. About 500 feet south of the David L. Schwartz blacksmith shop an auto came from the rear and had both headlights burning. I thought it was coming real fast and just about that time it hit our buggy. It felt as though it had thrown me and I landed under the horse near the ditch which is on the west side of the road. Katherine was laying in the ditch and the upper part of her body was lying above the ditch under the rig. Jacob was laying under the corner of the buggy box. Nothing was said by either of the others riding with me. Jacob and Katherine were breathing but not conscious."

OBITUARIES

Katherine M. Schwartz, 21, is the oldest daughter of Jacob J. and Mary Schwartz and was born near Berne on July 21, 1918. She was engaged in housework at home and was a popular young woman among the Amish sect.

Joseph [sic] M. Schwartz, 16, was the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob J. Schwartz and was born in this county October 19, 1923. He was engaged in farm work on his father's farm, known as the old George Martz farm, and was well known among the young Amish set.

The father, who married Mary Schwartz, daughter of Jacob (Huebeli) Schwartz, moved to this community from Allen county about thirty years ago.

Surviving, besides the grief stricken parents, are eleven brothers and sisters. They are John, Joseph, Amos, Noah, Rudolph, Henry, Fannie, Anna, Mary, Barbara and Elizabeth, all (cut off)....sudden departure...brother and sister.

## **Adams County Historical Museum**

**1940 Feb-Dec Scrapbook - image 027-028**

**Transcribed by Karin King**

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### **ACCUSE DRIVER IN FATAL CRASH**

**Youth Admits Auto Hit Buggy; Funeral Set for Victims**

**Decatur, Mar. 23 -**

Arthur E. Voglewede, Adams County Prosecutor, announced late this afternoon that charges of reckless homicide would be filed against Harry Roth, 19, of south of Monroe, as the result of the auto-buggy collision north of Berne Sunday evening, when Katherine M. Schwartz, 21, and her 16-year-old brother, Jacob M. were killed.

Roth, who at first told Ed P. Miller, sheriff and Russell Prior, state police officer, that he drove his car into a ditch after another auto had struck the buggy occupied by the two victims, this afternoon, told Prior that he “guessed” his car struck the buggy, repudiating his earlier story.

The charge of reckless homicide, first to be filed in this county under a law passed by the 1938 legislature, carries, upon conviction, a fine of \$100 to \$1000 and a prison sentence of 60 days to six months.

Funeral services for the victims will be held at the home of the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob J. Schwartz, north of Berne Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock. Burial will be in the Schwartz Cemetery, three miles north and one half mile east of Berne.

Roth and Dan Schwartz, a cousin of the victims and driver of the buggy, escaped injury.

**Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette (IN); March 26, 1940**

**Contributed by Jim Cox**