

(Handwritten date: Tuesday, December 31, 1940)

VICTIMS OF FIRE, BLAST

(Photo) Effects of an explosion and fire at the Leslie B. McKeever residence in Hunteertown Friday night had claimed lives of the father and three children yesterday. Pictured above are Grover, two; Kay, four and Raymond, three, left to right. Mrs. McKeever, also burned when a five-gallon can of mixed kerosene and gasoline exploded, was released from the Methodist hospital yesterday.

(Handwritten date: Monday, December 30, 1940)

rites to be Tuesday for four victims of Hunteertown blast

Bereft of her husband and three small children, Mrs. Leslie B. McKeever, 29, was left today the sole survivor of a family of five almost wiped out by an oil-gasoline explosion that rocked their home at Hunteertown Friday night.

She had been dismissed today from the Methodist Hospital, where the four members of her family died Saturday, the husband, 38, at 11 p.m., and Grover, 2, Ray, 3, and Kay, 4, at 7 p.m., 2 a.m. and 10 a.m. respectively.

Tuesday, she will endeavor to attend quadruple funeral services at the Harper Funeral Home at New Haven at 2 p.m., and a little later, burial rites in the IOOF Cemetery nearby, where two graves were prepared today.

The family tragedy, from which she alone emerged alive, took place when the husband sought to revive a dying living-room stove fire with an oil-gasoline mixture poured from a five-gallon can.

CHILDREN ALL IN ONE GRAVE

As they had been tucked in bed together in a bedroom adjoining the living room a few minutes before the death-dealing blast snuffed out their Yuletide happiness, the three children will sleep together in death, for they will be interred in a single grave.

Beside them, in another, will rest the father who sacrificed his life trying to save them when, realizing he was so badly shocked by the explosion that he could not rescue them from the burning home, he did not stop to extinguish his flaming clothing before staggering to a nearby neighbor for help.

Dr. A. M. Cottingham, pastor of the New Haven Grace Methodist Church, will read the last rites over the four flower-decked caskets.

McKeever is survived by his father, Charles McKeever, of Columbia City; five brothers, Clell, Ford, Ross, Warren and Park, all of Fort Wayne; three sisters, Mrs. Ed Gordon and Mrs. Clarence Heck, both of Fort Wayne, and Mrs. Joe Heck, of Indianapolis, and a grandmother, Mrs. Louisa Yant, of Churubusco.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Habig, of New Haven, are maternal grandparents of the McKeever children.

Adams County Historical Museum

1940 Scrapbook, image 165

Transcribed by Karin King