

60th YEAR—NUMBER 28

# The Indianapolis Times

FORECAST: Fair and cool with light frost tonight. Cloudy and showers by night tomorrow. Low tonight, 33; high tomorrow, 60.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 1949

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FINAL HOME

PRICE FIVE CENTS

## 'I Pray Thee, Father'



David H. Ficus, father of 3-year-old Kathy Ficus, prays over the opening of the dry well where his daughter is trapped.

## 2 Killed, 2 Hurt as Car Hits Tree, Falls in Canal

Fails to Negotiate Sharp Turn Near Fall Creek; 3 Other Fatalities Listed in Crashes

Photos, Page Two

Two men were killed and two more injured when the car in which they were riding smashed into a tree on Allisonville Rd. and plunged into a millrace near Fall Creek early today.

A Marine veteran died in his automobile last night after sideswiping a streetcar in the 2000 block on E. Washington St. State police reported two other deaths, one a 61-year-old pedestrian who was hit near Waterloo about 8 p. m. yesterday. The second was a motorcyclist who crashed into an automobile near Brazil last night and died today.

### List of Dead

The dead: Richard Lindsey, 24, of 1630 Bellefontaine St. Calvin White, 25, of 2103 Carrollton Ave. Kenneth R. Clark, 30, of 728 S. East St. Anthony F. Elliott, 61, of Waterloo.

Injured: George Kaehler, 19, of Brazil. Ira Carter, 21, of 1630 Bellefontaine St. Clifford Higgins, 29, of 2103 Carrollton Ave.

The automobile in which two died and two were injured failed to negotiate the sharp turn of Allisonville Rd. at Keystone Ave. as it approached the city at a high rate of speed about 4:30 a. m.

**Rips Guard Rail**—Deputy Sheriff Felix Blane and Donald Marks, who investigated the accident, said the car skidded sideways along the gravel berm of Allisonville Rd., knocked down a portion of guard rail along a small millrace leading from Fall Creek, hit a tree and came to rest with its nose in the water.

The impact as the car hit the tree sideways ripped the side of the car open and threw clear the two who died, Mr. Lindsey and Mr. White.

**Taken to Hospital**—Mr. Carter, driver of the car, and his surviving companion, Mr. Higgins, were taken to a pumping station office of the Indianapolis Water Co. nearby and later to General Hospital. Mr. Carter received a broken left leg and Mr. Higgins suffered fractured ribs.

They told police they had been on their way into the city from Noblesville, where they had gone last night. An observer, H. S. Newund, 2620 E. 71st St., told the deputy sheriffs he saw their car round the curve at an estimated 95 to 105 miles an hour.

The automobile was owned by Robert Rhubische, 26, of 1630 Bellefontaine St., who said he had loaned it to the men for the evening.

**Sideswipes Trailway**—Mr. Clark, married and the father of a son, Duane, 3, was driving west on E. Washington St. about 10:13 p. m. when his car sideswiped an E. Washington St. streetcar, bounced off and sideswiped a streetcar.

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# Trapped Girl's Fate In Doubt

## As Worker Cuts Into Well Shaft



A general view of the rescue attempt in San Marino, Cal.



## 'Kathy Kathy'— 'All She Did Was Cry,' Says Cousin

Boy, 5, Tells How He Found Abandoned Well

SAN MARINO, Cal., Apr. 9 (UP)—"All I did was call 'Kathy, Kathy,' but all she did was cry," little Gus Lyon, 5, said today.

He was telling how he found the abandoned, weed-covered well into which his three-year-old cousin, Kathy Ficus, slipped yesterday afternoon.

"I could hear Kathy crying," little Gus said. "But golly it was dark down that hole and I couldn't see anything. All I could hear was her crying."

Mrs. Hamilton Lyon, Gus' mother, said her son Stanley, 10, and Kathy's sister Barbara, 12, were playing in a vacant lot about 300 yards from the small Ficus home.

**Others Return**—Kathy was tripping along behind the older children.

The others returned to the Ficus home, and when Mrs. Ficus asked where Kathy was, they said, "Oh, she'll be along."

But Kathy didn't appear and Mrs. Ficus dropped her housework. With the other children she ran out.

Little Gus joined them. He didn't know what had happened, he said. He was just "looking for something" with the others.

Gus wandered off and came upon the mouth of the 14-inch casing lining the 120-foot deep old well in the lot.

He could hear Kathy crying. "I found her," he shouted, and his mother came running up.

**Calls to Girl**—Mrs. Lyon called down to Kathy.

"I asked if she could hear me," the aunt said. "First she said, 'yes,' then she just cried."

Mrs. Ficus was shocked and in tears. The two older children rushed home with her where she telephoned her husband, who called the fire department.

Mrs. Lyon said she and Mr. Ficus talked to Kathy for a couple of hours. All the time Kathy's voice was growing weaker and weaker until it finally stopped.

**When a Red, Red Robin Goes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' . . .**

POLICE LT. JACK SMALL, who has answered a lot of emergency calls in his time, believes appeals for help can go too far. Like this morning, for instance.

In charge of the desk, Lt. Small was taking incoming phone calls while his dispatcher was on relief. The phone rang and a man's voice said:

"There's a robin in my basement."

"A what?"

"A robin. A bird."

"Oh."

"I want him out of there."

"What do you want him out of there for?"

"I'm afraid he'll kill himself bumping into a wall."

"Well, go downstairs and chase him out."

"How?"

"Why, just open the door or window and shoot him out."

"But what if he comes back?"

"At this point, the fire alarm rang and Lt. Small asked the man to wait a moment while he took care of it. When he returned the man had hung up.

The lieutenant was just as happy to have it end that way.

**Baby's Body Found**

Police today were searching for the parents of an infant girl found dead wrapped in old newspapers shortly before noon on the west bank of the canal near the downtown district.

## Machinist Uses Drill On Casing Wall After Crew Digs New Tunnel

BULLETIN

SAN MARINO, Cal., Apr. 9 (UP)—A machinist who broke into the well casing in which 3-year-old Kathy Ficus has been trapped since late Friday said today he saw what he believed to be the child's pink dress, about 95 feet from the earth's surface. He said he was not sure that the object he saw was the dress.

By JOSEPH M. QUINN, United Press Staff Correspondent  
SAN MARINO, Cal., Apr. 9—A rescue technician dropped down a parallel shaft today and began cutting a 14-inch casing of an abandoned water well where 3-year-old Kathy Ficus was imprisoned.

Machinist O. A. Kelly attacked the rusted casing some 75 or 80 feet deep in the earth while the girl's anxious parents, other rescue workers and crowd of onlookers waited. The casing was 120 feet deep, and it was feared the child was all the way down.

The little girl toppled into the open top of the well while at play yesterday and had been trapped 17 hours. Her cries long since had stopped and it was not known if she were alive.

Two volunteer workers had cut a shaft on one side of the well through which Kelly worked his way to the casing. Another shaft on the opposite side of the well was stalled when diggers encountered rock and shale.

Mr. Kelly called for a hammer and chisel as he began his work and then requested a high speed drill. The tools were lowered down the rescue tunnel.

**Carries Telephone**—"This is pretty tough stuff," Mr. Kelly reported back over an inter-communication phone he carried.

A few minutes later Mr. Kelly reported he had broken his hydraulic saw. An electric saw was sent down to him.

Kathy's parents, Mr. and Mrs. David H. Ficus, watched tensely from a car parked nearby.

At 11:40 a. m. (Indianapolis Time) "Whitey" Glick, former Pennsylvania coal miner, went down into a gaping hole at the entrance of the rescue tunnel to stand by to relay Mr. Kelly.

At 11:45 a. m. Mr. Kelly telephoned he had completed opening two sides of the pipe.

**Noise of Tools Heard**—The loud speaker system connected with the inter-communication clearly recorded the banging of Mr. Kelly's hammer and chisel and the buzz of his saw.

A physician feared that the little girl could not be alive after the long entrapment in the narrow casing.

Workers at the top lowered a microphone directly down the well hole in an effort to pick up any sound from Kathy.

Mr. Kelly's banging and the raucous squawk of his own microphone sounded through the well hole.

The shaft through which he crawled was dug through a treacherous shifting 12-foot belt of sand from the bottom of a 72-foot-deep trough near the 120-foot shaft. It was believed the girl might be at the 120-foot level, and the rescue shaft was well above this depth.

Kathy had lain trapped in the well all night, and the last sound from her was heard about 8:30 p. m. Mr. Linnel and former miner John Inhart, who dug the lateral shaft, said they would not enter the pipe casing for "a couple of hours."

A physician expressed doubt they would find the child alive.

"Under such circumstances I don't see how she could live more than four hours," he said.

**Not Sure of Exact Depth**—Mr. Linnel and Mr. Inhart did not know the exact depth at which they hit the side of the casing. Their shaft from the side of the trough dipped slightly as it was pushed toward the casing cuts into the well, but the child and they estimated that they made contact somewhere between 75 and 85 feet in the earth.

They kept in touch with crews above through the use of portable microphones strapped to their bodies.

Rescuers said the well apparently was dry, even at the low level.

To protect themselves, the two men used 30-inch pipe to line the inside of the tunnel. They said aluminum braces would be put in the tunnel to prevent caving in which might trap them along with the girl they were trying to reach.

The shaft sunk by two volunteers appeared the best hope of reaching the girl. On the other side of the casing, whose upper end opened into a vacant lot, a 30-inch rotary well driller had started a parallel hole, but had been stopped by layers of rock and shale at the 65-foot level.

Giant excavating machines had labored throughout the night to dig away the trough. Floodlights kept the scene clearly illuminated during the night. Firemen pumped air into the tube to provide the

shaft with oxygen, and police forced big crowds to keep their distance.

A hushed crowd which swelled to 2500 last night watched the operations from behind ropes cutting off the area where the diggers worked. The crowd dwindled to 500 or 600 during the night, but spectators began gathering again this morning, and 200 police and special deputies prepared to handle 5000 watchers.

Mr. Linnel, after carefully tunneling completely around the tube was hauled to the surface to rest. Although estimates as to Kathy's location in the well ranged from 75 feet to as deep as 120, a steel measuring tape weighted with a rubber ball came to rest 87 feet from the surface. The ball came up dry, indicating no water at that level.

**Relatives on Scene**—On the scene were Kathy's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Kemore, Chula Vista, Cal., and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Lyon, the child's aunt and uncle.

A hushed atmosphere settled over the crowd of onlookers as they realized the rescuers were approaching Kathy's underground prison.

Authorities had turned down numerous offers of other volunteers to be lowered into the pipe.

Earlier, the workers were spurred on by faint cries from the child. But the hollow voice of the trapped little girl ceased about 8:30 p. m. (Indianapolis time), when the roar of digging equipment drowned out her voice.

**Midnight Volunteer**—Circus bachelors, jockeys, midgels and neighbor children volunteered to go into the well, but authorities said the inside of the pipe was so badly corroded that they would be badly cut.

Kathy plunged into the 20-year-old abandoned well while playing in the vacant lot with her sister, Barbara, 8, and a cousin, Gus Lyon, 5. Gus and Barbara ran to notify Mr. and Mrs. David Ficus, parents of the girl.

They telephoned police and then ran to the lot, calling Kathy. "Finally we heard her answer," sobbed Mrs. Ficus. "Her voice seemed to come from inside the earth. She kept calling, and finally we found the top of the hole."

**Hears Faint Response**—"Can you hear me, Kathy?" Mr. Ficus called, leaning over the well. "Yes," came the faint response.

"Yes, I am," Kathy answered again.

A little later they asked if she were lying down.

"Yes, I am," Kathy answered again.

Ironically, the well was drilled by the Churnis Water and Sewerage Co. of which Kathy's father is resident manager.

Fire equipment from Pasadena and San Marino soon arrived.

Police lowered a rope and thought the child caught it, but it broke loose when they started to raise it.

A policeman lowered his hands into the well, but the child would not grasp them and they were lost.

Johnny, the Philip Morris cigarette midgel, left a Hollywood radio show under police escort to volunteer for the job. When "Skeeter" Chaffers, 13, and Jack Allen, 18, a jockey, volunteered, Mr. Ficus told them to go.

"Thanks, boys. I want her saved, but not at the risk of some other youngster's life."

## Times Previews Spring Fashions

You can be "the prettiest lady" in the Easter Parade if you follow the suggestions for spring fashions in tomorrow's Sunday Times.

The Woman's Section will be "chock full" of stories and pictures to provide one of the most complete previews of spring fashions ever presented.

It's your guide to a "well dressed" Easter . . . another EXCLUSIVE for women . . . in the Sunday Times.

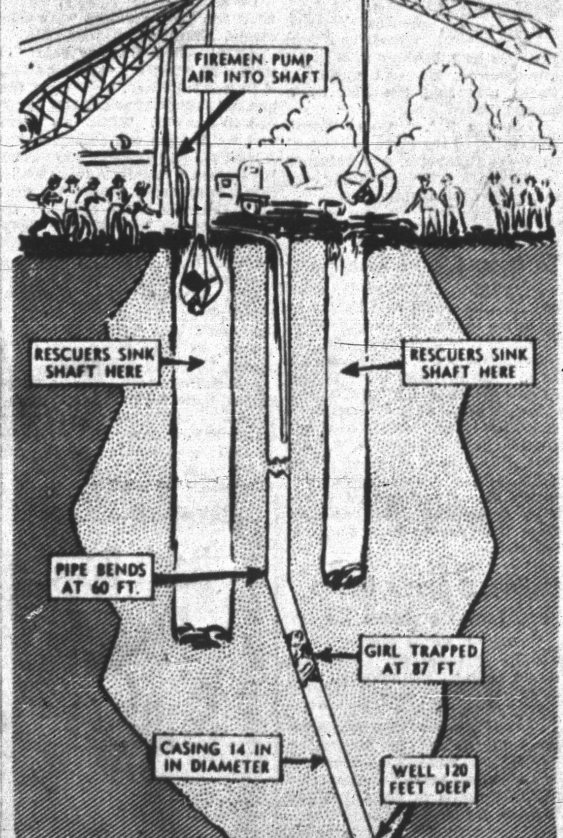


Diagram shows method rescuers are using in attempt to reach Kathy. Trapped 87 feet below, it is feared she may have slipped farther down. Shale stopped drilling on one side.

## Street Funds Must 'Stretch'

Indianapolis will have to stretch \$33,708.50 for street repair this year, City Controller Phillip L. Bayt disclosed today.

The amount represents the unexpended 1949 balance of the gasoline tax fund from the state as of Dec. 31.

While he knows how much he will have to reurface streets and fill chucks, the city controller painted a gloomy picture of an additional \$33,000 in gas tax revenues which the state has impounded.

This amount, according to Mr. Bayt, may have to be refunded to the state because of a gas tax law passed by the 1947 General Assembly.

Mr. Bayt said the law will be contested.