

Fayetteville, Tennessee

Airplane Crash

April 27, 1930

AIRPLANE FALLS ON CROWD, SEVEN KILLED.

By The Associated Press

Nashville, Tenn., April 27--Seven persons in a crowd, watching a stunt flyer at an airfield at Fayetteville, Tenn., were killed and approximately 20 were injured today when the plane crashed into the crowd.

The pilot, **Milton Cobert**, Columbia, Tenn., was sweeping over a railroad embankment where the crowd stood in order to land when the plane suddenly dived, falling about 80 feet, witnesses said. Neither the pilot nor his passengers were hurt.

The Frederick Post, Frederick, MD 28 Apr 1930



PLANE STRIKES CROWD, 8 KILLED, PILOT IS HELD

Sightseeing Ship Hits Spectators Standing On Rail Embankment

Flier Is Exonerated By Sheriff But Held For Safekeeping.

Fayetteville, Tenn., April 28--AP--Eight members of nearby farming communities who climbed to a railroad embankment to watch a Sunday airplane exhibition lay dead today, victims of a sight-seeing plane which crashed into the spectators. More than a dozen others were injured, four critically.

The pilot, **Milton P. Covert**, 23, Columbia Tenn. Who with two companions escaped uninjured, was held in jail in another county on a technical charge of murder pending a hearing today. Covert was exonerated of blame by the manager of the exhibition and **Sheriff M. W. Rhea**, but the officer said he removed the pilot to a neighboring jail as a precautionary measure against possible violence.

The dead:

BOONE BEARD, 14
KELLY TOWERY, 23.
LAWRENCE SMITH, 28.
MONROE MARBURY, 37.
MARVIN ASHBY, 30.
HURLEY SPRAY, 26.
RUFUS WADE BONNER, 9, Negro.
JASPER HERLSTON, 40.

Flier Landing Plane.

The latter died in a hospital of his injuries several hours after the accident.

Spectators in the crowd of several thousand which had surrounded the landing field said the plane was heading for a landing at an elevation of only ten feet when it dropped suddenly on the group gathered on the embankment. **Al Gombert**, manager of the flying organization which sponsored the exhibition with the American Legion post, said he believed the plane struck a downward current..

"It was over so quickly I couldn't tell what happened," Pilot **Covert** said.

Victims Decapitated.

He requested a physical examination after the accident and said doctors found him to be in condition to operate a plane.

Covert had taken up the plane alone three times, he said, to become accustomed to a brisk wind from the south. He then took up two passengers and it was on his return from this flight that the crash occurred. He had planned to follow the passenger trips with a series of stunts.

Four of the victims were decapitated by the propeller of the plane and the others were crushed by its weight.

Gombert said the spectators had been warned several times not to stand near the embankment.

The Lincoln Star, Lincoln, NE 28 Apr 1930



One of the worst air tragedies of the year occurred yesterday at a flying circus outside of Fayetteville, Tenn., where a pilot dived into a crowd gathered on the landing field, his plane killing eight spectators and injuring 16 others. Three of the injured were not expected to survive. The flier, **Milton Colvert** of Columbia, Tenn., was held today on a murder charge.

The Daily Courier, Connellsville, PA 28 Apr 1930



FAYETTEVILLE, Tenn., April 28.--

Milton Colvert, flying circus pilot of Columbia, Tenn., was held on a homicide charge today after an accident which killed six persons and injured 16 others yesterday.

Descending on a landing field, which was swarmed with spectators, Colvert purposely guided his plane low in order to frighten them away from the ship's path. Less than 50 feet above the field the plane suddenly dropped into the crowd, his whirring propeller striking with deadly effect.

Colvert said the accident was caused by an air pocket, while **Felix Campbell**, whose wife and child were among the injured, claimed the pilot had flown so low as to strike a telephone wire with his vehicle.

An angry mob formed about the flier and he was taken from the field by deputy sheriffs and later secretly removed to another county to await a hearing some time today.

The Daily Courier, Connellsville, PA 28 Apr 1930