

Facebook reuniting tornado victims with memories

April 30 2011, by Chris Lefkow



An American flag hangs off a destroyed house in the Alberta City area of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In a digital era update to the lost and found booth, a Facebook page started by an Alabama woman is reuniting victims of the killer US tornadoes with their precious family photos and documents.

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As of Friday afternoon, the page featured more than 600 pictures and documents, many just scraps after the powerful winds picked them up and deposited them in streets and yards up to 200 miles (320 kilometers) away.

"This is a photo of a baby girl sitting with Santa Claus in 1957," says one

entry accompanying a faded color picture which has "Baby 'Sandra'" written on the back. "Picture found in backyard in Duck Springs, AL."

[Facebook](#) user Nicole Hagood posted a picture of a Christmas gathering with the comment: "This photo was found hanging from a gutter in Muscle Shoals. If you recognize this family, please let me know."

Among the torn and rain-spattered documents posted on the site are birth certificates, wills, diplomas, utility bills, letters, checks and Valentine's and Mother's Day cards.

The page, "Pictures and Documents found after the April 27, 2011 [Tornadoes](#)," has been "liked" by nearly 50,000 people since it was set up in the hours after the tornadoes ripped through eight southern US states, killing over 300 people.

The page was created by Patty Bullion, a mother-of-three who lives in Lester, Alabama, near the border with Tennessee.

Bullion, 37, said her small town received heavy rain and strong winds but was spared the wrath of the tornadoes, the nearest of which touched down about 10 miles (16 kilometers) away.

"Our area was very blessed," she said in a telephone interview with AFP. "Downed trees, a little bit of roof damage but nothing that can't be fixed."

Bullion said she went on Facebook during the storm to get updates on loved ones and a friend a few houses away posted "It's raining pictures."

"So I went outside," she said. "I walked out the door and I saw something white lying outside in the road."

"I flipped it over and it was an ultrasound picture," she said. "It just ripped my heart out. I'm a Mom. I've got three kids. I can't imagine losing these items."



As the sun sets, firefighters help in search and rescue efforts in the Rosedale community on April 28, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In a digital era update to the lost and found booth, a Facebook page started by an Alabama woman is reuniting victims of the killer US tornadoes with their precious family photos and documents.

Bullion said that after the storm passed over she went outside with her husband and children and collected another seven or eight pictures.

Her daughter suggested she put them on her Facebook page but "I knew if we did that only our friends would see it," Bullion said.

"So I started a group," she said, "thinking I'd probably get 100 people on it and if I could just identify one picture it would be worth my time.

"I didn't know it would get this big," she said. "This has been too overwhelming to a small town girl."

Bullion said at least 40 items have been claimed so far.

"Two pictures last night were identified as people that just lost their lives and their family are wanting the pictures back," she said.

Bullion, who had been scheduled to start a new job on Wednesday at the Limestone County council on aging, said creating the page and reading the comments has been an emotional experience for her.

"I was adopted when I was two so I had no idea what I looked like as a baby," she said. "So I know what it's like to not have those pictures.



Cars and homes lay in ruins in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, two days after a tornado ripped through the area damaging neighborhoods and killing more than 300 across the Southern US. In a digital era update to the lost and found booth, a Facebook page started by an Alabama woman is reuniting victims of the killer US tornadoes with their precious family photos and documents.

"I sat there last night and I cried," she said. "I'm not a big crier but tears have rolled. These are these people's lives that are just gone."

Besides family photos and documents, the page has also become a

repository for people to share their own emotions following the tragedy.

"This page is wonderful," wrote Tina Moyers Hill. "I wish we would have had a page like this after Katrina. God bless all of you that was affected by this horrible event."

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