



## Inverness Tornado 1983

### Fact Sheet

- Date: April 9, 1983
- Time: 1155 am
- Estimated Tornado Intensity: F3
- Estimated Maximum Wind: 158-206 mph
- Tornado Width (Yards): 80
- Path Length (Miles): 10
- Deaths: 3
- Injuries: 2
- Damage Amount: 2.5 M
- Number of Homes Damages: Unknown
- County: Citrus

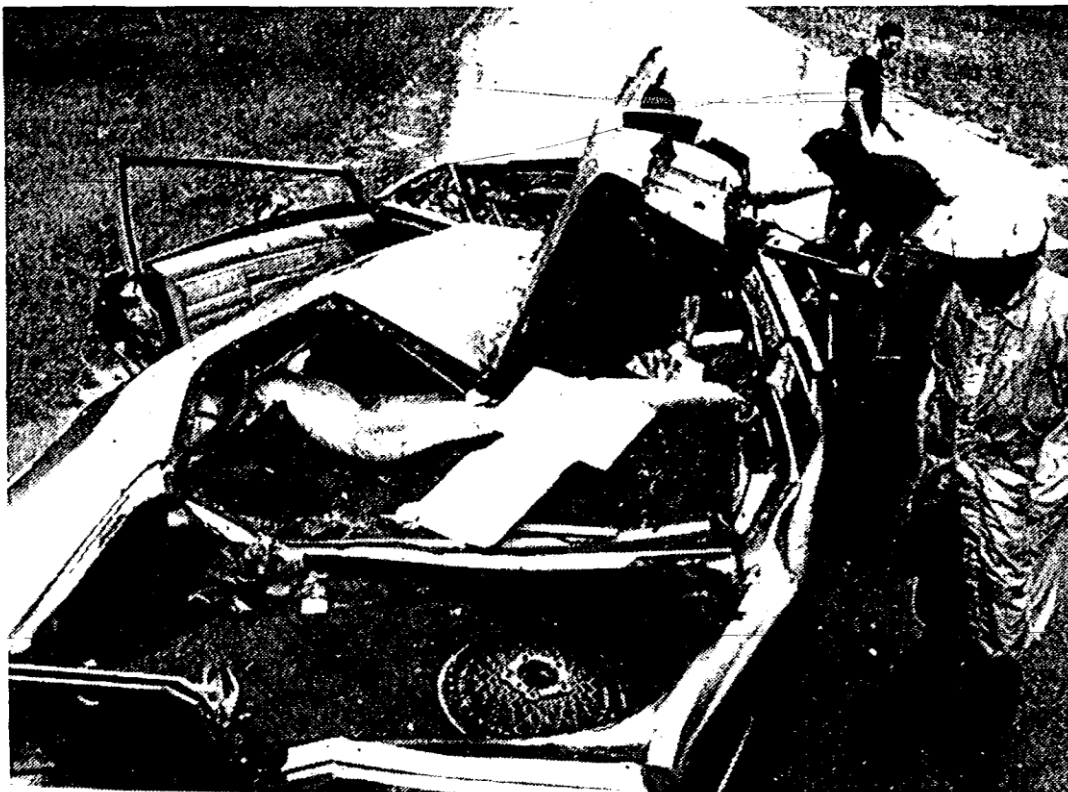


Photo by JEFF CAMP

Citrus County Fire Prevention Capt. Bill Hoppert looks over what is left of a sedan which was hurled through the air by a tornado, killing three of four occupants.

Tampa Tribune



## Twister kills 3 Inverness residents

A 9-year-old was the only family member who survived the tornado's onslaught.

Tampa Tribune

### Summary of event:

On April 9, 1983 the winds started to pick up in Citrus County. A twister touched down and cut several paths through the county from the southwest to the northeast. Having little mercy for anything in its path way, it damaged several homes and even tore through a school house.

### Detailed experiences:

Roger Smith (an adult) and Brian Brantley (11 years old) were about to leave from Mills Direct Carpets, which is a warehouse on State Road 44, when the twister struck. **"We...saw a wall of white. I couldn't see anything," Smith said. He took the boy and crouched beneath a heavy metal beam as the winds peeled the thin metal siding and roof from the building. It lasted only a minute, Smith said, but it was long enough to frighten the child. "He started to run and the wind began to pick him up. I had to grab him and pull him back," Smith said. The building looked like it had taken a direct hit from a bomb. The metal wall and roof were torn back like a banana peel, and doors were ripped off (Tampa Tribune, April 10<sup>th</sup>, Section 18A).**

As little league baseball games were cancelled and many people stayed inside to avoid the twister; many home's roofs were torn off; other houses had tree limbs and objects thrown into them, and one gas station was destroyed. The pumps and **"feeder lines"** were snapped and fuel leaked everywhere **(Tampa Tribune, April 10<sup>th</sup>, Section 18A)**. As the twister twisted and grinded whatever was in its path, many people were lucky to survive but three people were not so lucky to get away with their lives. **The tornado lifted the Tarts' car from Forest Drive near State Road 44 in Inverness. Authorities said the car landed 300 feet from the highway. Mr. Tart, 47, was thrown from the car. Mrs. Tart, whose age was not available, and Steven were crushed within the car, authorities said. Jennifer, the only other person in the car,**

# NOAA AND THE PRESERVE

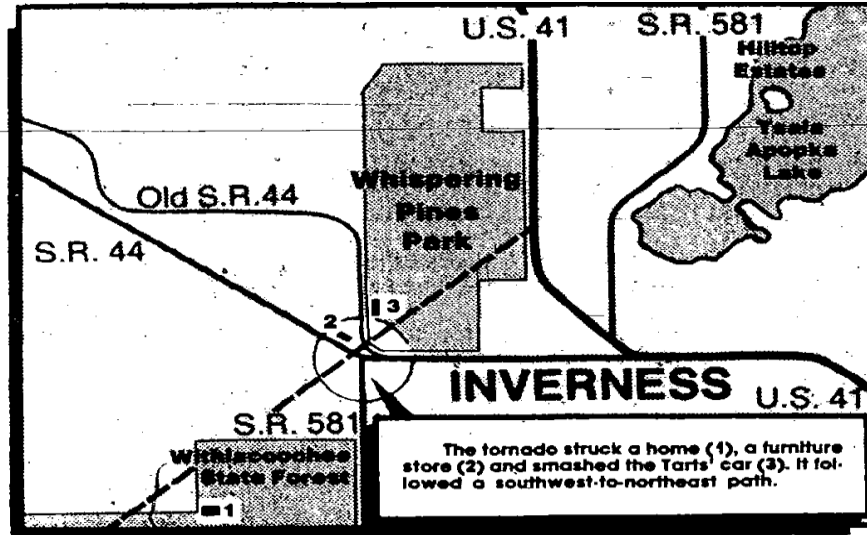
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suffered two skull fractures, a broken neck, and a broken arm, a hospital spokesman said (St. Petersburg Times, April 10<sup>th</sup>, Sections 1-A , 20-A).

In the aftermath, Citrus County had quite a bit of damage. Fortunately, the county only lost three lives and suffered two injuries to this devastating disaster.



Tribune map

Areas where the tornado did damage  
Tampa Tribune



St. Petersburg Times — BOB MORELAND  
Remnants of mobile home hit by a tornado Saturday lie scattered in Lecanto. No one was in the home at the time.

St. Petersburg Times



# 3 killed as twister hurls car 300 feet

■ In Florida, tornadoes struck. In Mississippi, Louisiana and Missouri, destruction came in the form of floods. The results were equally tragic. Three members of an Inverness family were killed Saturday when a tornado hurled their car 300 feet. In other parts of Citrus

County, businesses and homes were damaged. In the flood-ravaged states, more than 27,000 people waited for the waters to drop so they could return to their homes. Eleven people have died. Details of the floods and the tornadoes are below. ■

## Tornado: Girl, 8, survives tragedy of Inverness family

By ANN MARIE LASKIEWICZ  
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

INVERNESS — Three members of an Inverness family were killed when a twister hoisted their car 100 feet in the air and

## Floods: Storm moves on, but waters leave families stranded

Compiled from UPI, AP wires

Five years ago, Nell and John Thomas were told that the land they bought for their house trailer in Slidell, La. had flooded only twice in 20 years.

St. Petersburg Times

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Simon Rogers and his son John inspect tornado damage to Sidney Griffith's service station and grocery on County Road 491 south of Lecanto. They had just left the store when the twister hit. St. Petersburg Times — BOB MORELAND

**St. Petersburg Times**