

STORMTRACK



SEPTEMBER 30, 1987

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 6



TIM MARSHALL, EDITOR

PHIL SHERMAN, ASSISTANT EDITOR

COVER: View of the first in a pair of tornadoes taken by Wallace Eyre on the evening of May 29, 1987, just west of the town of Wolfforth, Texas. The event was rated at F-2. (See West/Lubbock County Tornadoes, page 10)

STORMTRACK

Stormtrack is a non-profit publication intended for the scientist and amateur alike who share an avid interest in the acquisition and advancement of knowledge concerning severe or unusual weather phenomena.

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PUBLICATION STAFF

Timothy P. Marshall
Editor-in-Chief

Philip E. Sherman
Assistant Editor

Gene D. Rhoden
Design Editor

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Tim Marshall
1336 Brazos Blvd.
Lewisville, Texas 75067

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PHIL SHERMAN, ASSISTANT EDITOR
1336 BRAZOS BLVD.
LEWISVILLE, TEXAS 75067



VOL. 10, NO. 6
BI-MONTHLY
CHECKS PAYABLE
TO THE EDITOR

I. COMMENTARY

SEVERE WEATHER DROUGHT CONTINUES

First, it was the tornado drought, and now the lack of hurricanes. What's going on mother nature? It looks like 1987 will go into the record books as having the lowest number of severe weather events in recent history. Some year. Sure, it's possible for a fall tornado outbreak or a November hurricane to occur, but it's rare. I'm afraid severe weather will have to wait until next year. That is, unless you want me to talk about that white fluffy stuff. ... Nah.

As I settle back for the fall season, I'm reminded of spring. The chill in the morning air reminds me of early March. Glimpses of thunderstorms on the horizon make me believe the dryline is active again, but it's only a cold front barreling through. Leaves on the trees are falling, not budding! So it has to be fall. Post chase season depression sets in. What do storm chasers do during the winter? They prepare for spring, of course. But how many times can you change the oil in your car? So, to renew my spirits, I watch a video tape of a past chase. The spring fever chase feeling comes back, although it's temporary.

The vote on the new look of ST was 44 yes, 0 no. The only problem encountered was the unexpected "tire track" or "debris swath" the post office put on the cover. All that ink to cancel a tiny stamp! They tell me hand canceling each issue is too time consuming. So, future issues of ST will have a piece of paper placed over the cover which will hopefully save the cover from ink marks.

A positive note that occurred this spring was the implementation of the Severe Thunderstorm Outlook by some of the Texas National Weather Services. For years only Oklahoma City had issued this outlook with their own versions of severe weather potential. For chasers on the road away from a data source, this outlook is essential in keeping abreast of the latest weather changes. Thanks NWS.

II. CHASER NEWS

TORNADOES ON MARS- Scientists from Brown University say thousands of tornadoes skip across Mars at the end of every summer. They reached their conclusion by studying thousands of "scratch-like" marks on the surface. The lines disappear each fall, apparently covered by blowing dust. They say that a martian tornado would more fit the definition of our dust whirls since thunderstorms do not exist. -New York Times

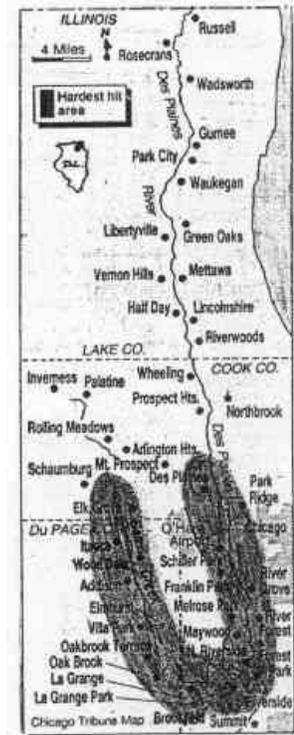
HISTORIC MOUNTAIN TORNADO- In July, an apparent tornado caused a damage swath 20 miles long by 2 miles wide in mountainous terrain in northwest Wyoming. So says tornado chieftain T. T. Fujita. -AP

Dave Hoadley authored an article in the WMO Bulletin Vol 36, July 1987, on STORM CHASING IN THE U. S. A.

Two new videos are available from the editor: 1987 CHASE HIGHLIGHTS- plenty of supercells, wall clouds, funnels, lightning and excitement. Hot off the press is a HISTORICAL TORNADO VIDEO which has 20 famous tornadoes since 1951 in black and white (silent). Each video is 1-1/2 hours and costs \$30 ppd.

III. LETTERS/PHONE CALLS TO THE EDITOR

Wayne Brasler witnessed the historic floods in Chicago. "Regarding the August floods, the official amount of 17.01 inches makes this month the wettest month in Chicago history. The rain which did most of the damage occurred on August 13th and 14th. A total of 9.35 inches was recorded at O'Hare Airport. Although flood damage occurred over a widespread area, the major damage resulted in the western suburbs. Much of the flooding came from the Des Plaines river, which flows north to south in the area, and from Salt Creek, which is to the west. Many of the areas hit in the current flooding were also hit by floods last year. Rainfalls (in inches) during Chicago's wettest month were: 3rd .01, 8th .35, 9th .03, 13th 2.86, 14th 6.49, 15th .59, 16th 2.90, 18th .28, 21st .56, 25th .48, and 27th 2.46. The rainfall last August was only an inch. People seemed most surprised by how quickly the water rose and receded and by its terrible smell. In the forest preserve surrounding Salt Creek, a few blocks from my home, the water came right up the embankments flooding a local bicycle path. I ventured a bike ride and ran into some deer heading for higher ground. It was hard to tell who was more surprised-- them or me.



Editor's note: The historic floods in Chicago resulted from synoptic scale fronts that became stationary over the area several times that month. The storms would develop along the front in the late afternoon from northern Illinois through Iowa and Kansas. The upper air flow steered the storms to the northeast, paralleling the front. With summertime dewpoints in the 70's, there was plenty of moisture around to be condensed. The front was the necessary boundary forcing the moist air from the southeast to rise and condense the water vapor into heavy rainfalls. The additional cool "outflows" from the rains helped reinforce the frontal boundary and the cycle continued.

Gretchen Driftmeyer reports that northwest Ohio has also suffered from the severe weather drought this spring. "There were only two thunderstorms from March through the first half of May! By mid-May I was 'itchy' so I headed for Canada. Little did I realize that I would be treated to 80 degree weather and severe thunderstorms. May 14th dawned with the perfect type of air mass for severe weather -- warm, muggy, with relative humidities in the 70's, and 40 mph winds from the south-southwest and gusty. Lovely altocumulus castellanus formed by 8 am. I monitored the Buffalo, NY weather radio all day as the clouds cleared and the sky became clear and sunny. There seemed little promise of severe weather according to the National Weather Service. But a strong continental cold front was moving in from the northwest.

It was so humid that my glasses fogged up whenever I would take a picture. The wind remained high all day. I was stuck on the Niagara escarpment waiting. No cumulus towers went up at all! The only sign of convective activity was a layer of altostratus moving in from the northwest by 6 pm. By this time, the wind was dying down so I dropped to the lower canals to watch a few freighters. At 8:30 pm, I headed for a motel, all hot and sticky, tired and dusty, disappointed there were no storms. By 9 pm, while I was munching on a late supper of fast food, a storm approached. Suddenly, it hit with 70 mph winds, brilliant colored lightning, heavy rain, and hail. The storm had definite rotation; there were reports of tornadoes. Straight line winds knocked out power. The storm lasted five hours. Listening to the marine band radio, I heard that a ship in the canal almost ran aground. She was caught in a 15 mile open stretch of water without any shelter. Her captain, a French-Canadian, had some choice comments to make over the radio.

On August 16th, I witnessed a severe weather event which had tragic consequences for the crash of Flight 255 in Detroit. Thunderstorms nearby had definite rotation and a wall cloud. I knew it had the potential for wind shear and microbursts. At 6 pm, the air temperature dropped 20 degrees and the wind gusted to 50 mph.

Joel Ewing called moaning and groaning about the lousy "monsoon" season in Arizona. "In fact, I called it a "non-soon". After I talked to you, I started home and all of a sudden a big funnel cloud popped out of the clouds right above me! About five miles due east of my position, a gorgeous white funnel came within 500 feet of the ground and was photographed by a guy with a VCR who just happened to be driving by. Another funnel touched ground and blew a van off the road, smashing all the windows. I guess it pays to curse at the clouds. "

Jim Placzek writes about a morning hailstorm which swept through the Omaha, NE area on September 22, 1986. "There were no major fronts in the area; however, an apparent upper level disturbance was over central Nebraska. At the surface, temperatures were in the mid 60's, and at 18,000 feet they were 10 F. Overnight, thunderstorms dissipated over central Nebraska, but a lone thunderstorm formed northeast of Grand Island about 7:30 am. The storm moved east at 40 mph through Merrick, Polk, Butler, and Saunders counties reaching its peak in Butler and Saunders (see map). Storm echo tops were reported to 52,000 feet and 3" diameter hail fell in portions of the storm's track accompanied by 75 mph winds along with 3 to 4 inch rainfalls within a half a hour. The storm damaged 40 farm buildings and wiped out many crops in the affected counties. The storm entered Douglas County (southwest Omaha) around 10:10 am. Hail up to 1" in diameter fell to a depth of six inches. Heavy rains washed the hail into the streets clogging sewers. Hail piled to three feet in places and a dense fog formed over it. The storm weakened and collapsed over Omaha. Another storm formed at the back of this storm over Butler county and rolled through Omaha around 12:30 pm. This storm brought high winds to 60 mph which downed trees in central Omaha. The storm moved to the south into northeast Kansas dropping hail up to 4 inches in diameter at Falls City around 3 pm. At my location, 3473 Washington Street, I received only marble-size hail and 1.7 inches of rain. This is the second straight September we had a number of severe weather events, so it looks like our transition to fall is becoming more dangerous than our transition to Spring. "



Brian Schroeder nearly became an unsuspecting debris particle. "It was about 4 pm on July 30, 1987 when a thunderstorm began. I was at work in the city of Buffalo, NY and in my opinion, this was just another typical thunderstorm. When I left for work, about 4:30 pm, the storm had passed and the sun was out. On my way home, I could see the dark clouds just southeast of me and they did not look all that menacing. I arrived home and turned on the TV, which showed a special news bulletin about a tornado that just touched down in Cheektowaga, a town just a few miles from my home. I suddenly became very chagrined when I realized that I passed close to the 'target area' about 10 minutes after the tornado hit. The 6 pm news showed live coverage and a brief glimpse of the tornado that someone managed to record on their video camera. The scene was incredible; a large mass of leaves, paper, tree branches, and wood swirling in a large circle behind a row of trees was all that could be seen. The cameraman raised his camera to show a weakening funnel disappearing into the thunderhead.

The next day, I drove through part of the damaged area and I certainly was not the only one interested. A long line of cars filled with curious passengers drove slowly through the area. I pulled into the parking lot of the Holiday Showcase restaurant and theaters. The restaurant roof was caved in. Tree branches and billboard pieces from a miniature golf course across the street were strewn around the parking lot. I decided not to drive through the area of damaged homes as the area was blocked by police and home owner victims were not at all pleased with the 'tourists' looking on. A week later I was able to drive through the area and was amazed at the brute force of the tornado, which had winds over 100 mph and left \$15 million dollars in damage. Fortunately, no injuries or deaths; however, one scar that may take a long time to heal is the haunting memory of a rare event that they hope will never happen again."

Keith Brewster sent in an ominous message which appeared on the Weather Service AFOS computer late one evening:

TTAA00 KICT 020358
 TO: WSFO TOPEKA AND ALL KANSAS WSFOS
 FROM: ICT

THE SEVERE WEATHER SEASON HAS BEGUN. DAVID HOADLEY WAS IN THE WICHITA OFFICE TONIGHT AND IS HEADED FOR DODGE CITY TONIGHT. HE THINKS WESTERN KANSAS WILL BE RIPE FOR TOMORROW. ... ELAND

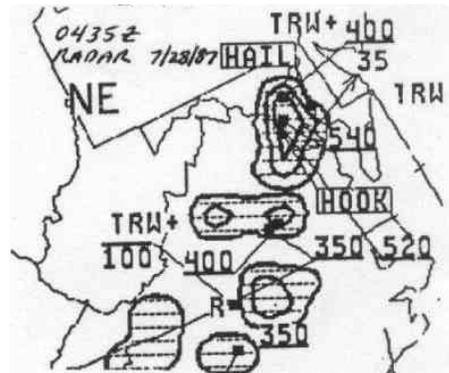
Steve Flood was involved in a flood right in his own neighborhood. "On July 27th, a diffuse cold front moved through Washington D. C., with light northwest winds and noticeably drier air. Temperatures still remained hot during the day, in the low 90's. Storms fired up in the Carolinas. By late afternoon, the surface winds died and then became light from the south bringing back 70 F dewpoints. A weak mid-level trough caused the weak front to move back northward. By 9 pm, small echoes formed in

the west suburbs. The cells organized into two main clusters by 10:30 pm. The smaller cluster moved through the northern suburbs, located about 15 miles north of Dulles Airport. The other, larger cluster was located about 50 miles southwest of the Airport. The 500 mb winds were north of west, about 285 degrees at 20 knots, so we sadly shrugged our shoulders (the evening shift at the World Weather Building) and wrote it off as another "miss" for the area. Parts of Washington D. C. had less than 3/4 of an inch of rain for the whole month!

Then a 'strange' thing happened. The cluster of storms to the south-west began GROWING northeastward and to the LEFT of the 500 mb winds! By 11:30 pm, I left the World Weather Building to bike home. My house is only 4 miles south of the office in Clinton, MD. There was still some question as to whether the north edge of the line would expand far enough to reach us. As I headed south, there was frequent lightning to the south-southwest (FQT LGTIC 180-230). I began peddling as fast as my feet would go. The more I peddled, the more frequent the lightning (Van-de-graph generator?) Two miles from home and counting, I could see all types of lightning to the west almost continuously illuminating the whole southwest quadrant of the sky. The storm looked like an Oklahoma type with a striated shelf cloud. By the time I reached the Safeway store, a half mile from home, the shelf cloud roared by. I could see lightning to the northwest (310). I knew we were in for a good storm then, so I sought shelter under a the store canopy. Suddenly, a wall of heavy rain hit with almost continuous lightning and high winds. It was:

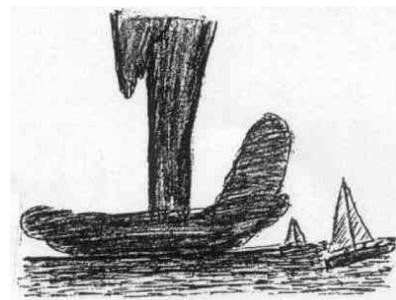
W10X1/4TRW+A 29V2425G45 FQT LGTICCCCG ALQDS HLSTO 1/4-3/4 DIA
 (... or a bad storm)

The rain quit in about 35 minutes or so. When I reached home, I checked the rain gauge and had 1.27 inches. Not since August 30, 1978 has a storm struck with such magnitude in the early morning hours. Andrews AFB had over 3 inches of rain in two hours. The radar summary at 0435Z shows an echo top of 54,000 feet over the area. So much for Paul Revere's midnight ride."



Roy Britt sent in a newspaper article from Cleveland, Ohio showing a photograph of a "giant" waterspout just offshore in Lake Erie which occurred on June 28th about 11:30 am. The photograph was taken by a crew member of a boat competing in a regatta. Hundreds of people saw the vortex churning the lake surface and shooting up a large water spray. According to the newspaper, the waterspouts were first sighted around 6:30 am and continued all day until evening. One giant spout crashed onto the breakwater near Gordon Park around 11 am, then headed across the lake.

John Gergen, 40, of Cleveland saw a spectacular spout while racing in a 90 sailboat regatta. "I've seen 20 or 30 in my lifetime, but never one as large as this one on the race course. It was incredible. From about 200 yards away the spout appeared to be 50 yards wide and towered to perhaps 1,500 feet. On the water, it looked like dust swirling. About two minutes later, it formed a funnel cloud."



The Weather Service reported the tops of thunderstorms reached 25,000 feet. Cloud base was around 4,000 feet.

Also, Roy sent in an article from the Rocky Mountain News of a spectacular dusty tornado which occurred near Denver, Colorado on July 2, 1987. The tornado plowed through farmland east of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, eight miles northeast of Stapleton Airport. Witnesses said the tornado reached ground at 3:27 pm and moved northeast until it dissipated at 3:41 pm. It was highly visible from Denver as the tornado kicked up dirt and debris several miles into the air. "It was dead in the center of the proposed site of the new airport," said an Aurora policeman. One television news helicopter took excellent video of the tornado.

Dave Hoadley writes that he is enthusiastic about the new STORM TRACK. "Its beginning to look like a professional journal, with slick cover, better quality paper, and more pages. The price increase is a modest one and reflects the ambitious new concept. This is just the kind of fresh thinking I was hoping for, when I turned ST over. I look forward to more and better photographs of tornadoes, and who knows; tomorrow it may be at your neighborhood newsstand."

Dave also gives some advice on taking video of tornadoes. "This spring was my first opportunity to do extensive taping of tornadic storms, and it was an education. The following steps are recommended:

1. Think CALM, however difficult this may be. Slight shaking of the camera makes unpleasant bouncy pictures. This is especially true if the lens is set for maximum telephoto.
2. Once you've locked onto a good rotating base, hold the scene for at least a minute. Let the viewer see the actual movement in that cloud feature before zooming off in another direction,
3. Trust the telephoto to bring out distant detail, even though you may not clearly see it in your viewfinder. I made the mistake several times, zooming back for a full scene view of a weak contrast cloud base, when I should have zoomed in to enlarge and "bring it out." You'll be surprised at how much detail you can capture. (Even after dusk.)
4. Know your camera's delay time for filming and sound pickup. On my older camera, the sound doesn't begin until several seconds of taping starts. Thus, I've lost several initial comments while responding to an exciting scene.
5. Allow several seconds of lead film at both the beginning and end of each sequence. This will make subsequent editing much easier, and you won't be sacrificing good parts right at the start or end.

Actually, with experience, a good camera man will probably learn to edit as he films, thinking ahead and only taping those scenes that are truly worthwhile. Unfortunately for me, that degree of expertise is still several years off."

IV. ROSTER

The ST Roster lists names, addresses, and brief bibliographies of those persons who are interested in or willing to correspond with others about storms. Normally, only recent entries since the last issue are included.

Name	Address	Chase country-range
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Juni or Hendrickson	Rt 4, Box 81A Kevil, KY 42053	
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Bibliography: "I'm 24, single, and very interested in weather. I am currently a staff coordinator for Skywarn in my region. In my state, Skywarn projects are a division of Kentucky Disaster and Emergency Services. We have approximately 25 volunteers who are always willing to do weather spotting, no matter what time or day!"

Brian Schroeder	24 Irwinwood Road Lancaster, NY 14086	
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Bibliography: "I'm a 21 year old two-year college graduate in graphic arts. I have been interested in tornadoes since I was about 5 years old. Unfortunately, I have never seen a live tornado, but have seen many films and documentaries on them. I would like to hear from anyone who has a lot of luck every spotting season in hopes of a possible meeting and chasing adventure."

Craig Van Antwerp	5675 SW 206th Ave. Aloha, Oregon 97007	
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Bibliography: I'm 34, married, and have a son Carl who is 2-1/2 years old. I work for a company that manufactures injection molded plastic parts. My job is "Mold Operator". I'm studying math, physics, and chemistry in my free time. I like to keep up on the latest happenings in Science, take pictures, and play the Oregon lottery hoping to be an instant millionaire. I am your average person trying to lead a happy life. I'm a thrill seeker and that's why storm chasing interests me.

Steven Krane	816 Sherman Ave. Thornwood, NY 10594	
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Bibliography: "I am a 30 year old lawyer, practicing in New York City. Tornadoes have enthralled me since I saw one in Nashville, TN, in April, 1972, and I've studied meteorology and severe weather ever since. As an amateur radio operator, I have helped provide communications to areas affected by severe storms and other natural disasters. I have never actually chased tornadoes, however, I would like to get in touch with experienced chasers with whom I could link up for a 'tornado vacation' in the plains next Spring."

Greg Story says, "A 136 page book entitled 'Tornado: Accounts of Tornadoes in Iowa' by Dr. John Stanford has been updated. The book has over 200 tornado photographs and many eyewitness accounts. The book costs \$9.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling available from Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 50010. If you've never owned a copy, you should." Editor: I agree, it's a great book. I wish every state published one.

THE SARAGOSA, TEXAS TORNADO
MAY 22, 1987by Bill Alexander
Lubbock, WSFO

At 8:15pm, May 22, 1987, the small community of Saragosa, Texas was devastated by a violent multiple-vortex tornado. Of the 183 inhabitants, 30 were killed and 121 injured. The tornado touched down on the west side of town, completely enveloping everything within the town as it curved toward the north. The tornado had a very short path length but was just over a half-mile wide, striking an isolated community in otherwise sparsely populated ranchland.

The first radar indication of a severe storm was noted by Midland radar (WSR-57) at 3:20 pm. The storm, located at azimuth 244 degrees at 108 nm from Midland (or about 20 miles northwest of Balmorhea), had a maximum top of 50,000 feet with a VIP 6 core. Hail was indicated in the storm. At 3:55 pm, golfball-size hail was reported. As of 4:35 pm, the top was down to 37,000 feet, but by 6:05 pm it built back to 44,000 feet. At this time, it was located at azimuth 240 degrees, at 95 nm with little movement indicated. The 6:41 pm radar summary from Midland showed this thunderstorm to have a maximum echo top of 51,000 feet with a VIP 5 core. Figure 1 depicts the path and location of the Saragosa supercell as it tracked across Reeves County.

By 7:20 pm, the storm had become an obvious supercell, with the maximum top displaced directly over the sharpest reflectivity gradient along the inflow side of the storm. The storm now had a VIP 6 core to 21,000 feet and a VIP 5 core to 31,000 feet. It was located 20 miles southwest of Pecos. A Severe Thunderstorm and Flash Flood Warning were issued by the Midland Weather Service valid until 8:45 pm.

Within the next half hour, the maximum top varied between 57,000 feet and 61,000 feet, while the equilibrium level was a mere 37,000 feet! (What an overshoot!!) The precipitation core of the storm was about 10 miles north of Saragosa, showing movement to the east at 10 knots. As the storm continued to move slowly east during the next twenty minutes, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) officers and Skywarn spotters observed it continuously. Spotters reported a rotating wall cloud at 7:46 pm, 4 miles northwest of Balmorhea, and again at 7:48 pm, two miles west of Balmorhea. At 7:54 pm, a tornado warning was issued by the Midland WSO for Reeves County valid until 9:00 pm. At 7:57 pm, golfball-size hail was reported by a spotter in Balmorhea.

The first tornado was reported by a Pecos DPS officer at 8:05 pm, 4 miles west of Balmorhea. This tornado had a brief ground track of less than a mile and did no appreciable damage in open ranchland.

The Saragosa tornado was first reported at 8:14 pm by a Pecos DPS officer 4 miles east of Balmorhea, about 1.5 miles south-southwest of Saragosa. It was simultaneously observed by a family from Midland who were driving southbound on Highway 17, just north of Saragosa. The family was able to escape the tornado.

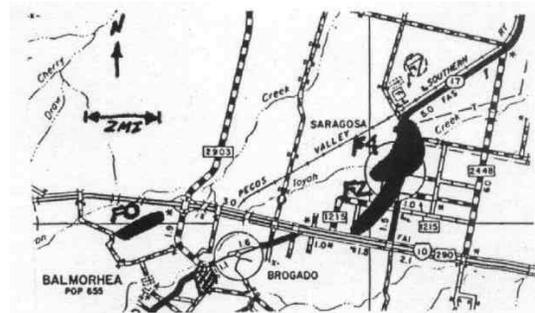
The strong single vortex tornado swept across ranchland between I-10 and Saragosa destroying a farm house and several outbuildings. This tornado was a precursor to the larger and much more violent multiple-vortex tornado (see figure).

Editor's note: It was at this time that Mr. Rosendo Carrasco took the only photographs known of the tornado. Mr. Carrasco had just left Saragosa after taking pictures of the pre-kindergarten graduates at the community hall. For many, it was their final picture. As Mr. Carrasco started home for Balmorhea, he saw the twister form in front of him. He snapped a couple of photographs of what looked like a twister in the sky. It wasn't long before he was back in Saragosa again, this time in his capacity as justice of the peace, carrying out the grim task of certifying deaths, as well as assisting rescue operations for the living.

As the single vortex tornado approached from the south, a huge twister materialized on the west side of Saragosa. From debris scatter and field scour marks, the large tornado apparently absorbed the single vortex into its circulation. The first evidence of the multi-vortex storm was .5 miles west of Highway 17 on Farm Road 1215. The tornado rapidly expanded in width, and its intensity quickly increased from F0 to F3 and F4 as it moved through town. Within a half mile, the tornado struck the small business district that lined Highway 17, which runs north-south along the east side of town. About 100 yards north of that intersection the Guadalupe Hall, in which graduation ceremonies were being conducted, was levelled. Twenty-two people died here including many children.



Texas locator map



Saragosa map

Within .3 miles of touchdown, the tornado began to curve east then northeast. It straddled Highway 17 until it lifted. Total path length was just 1.9 miles, and the maximum path width was between .5 and .6 miles. When the continuous path of the single vortex tornado is added to the path length, the total was 3 miles. F0 damage on the fringe of the storm path amounted to downed power and telephone lines, destroyed outbuildings, lost corrugated metal roofing material and broken tree limbs. F1 and F2 damage occurred within a half block of the F0 damage and consisted of lost roofs, broken power poles and tree limbs. F3 damage amounted to removal of exterior walls on structures (wood frame and adobe) and impact of metal objects by wooden and concrete missiles. The most intense damage, F4 in strength, occurred over most of the residential and business area. F4 intensity measured .75 miles in length and .25 miles wide. Within this area, homes were totally destroyed, with no interior walls left standing. Many automobiles were hurled into buildings, some between 500 and 900 feet into an open field east of Highway 17.

Estimated property damage was \$1.3 million dollars which amounts to 85 percent of the total property value. Virtually all the residents of Saragosa were unemployed and uninsured. However, this is a community of long standing traditions, whose existence dates back nearly a century, and many of its residents were second and third generations. They will find a way to rebuild."

VII. FEATURE 2

WEST LUBBOCK COUNTY TORNADOES

MAY 29, 1987

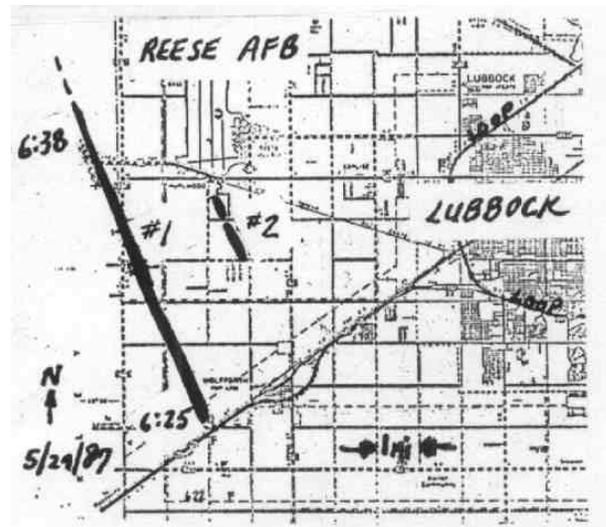
by Bill Alexander
Lubbock, WSFO

A pair of tornadoes developed in far western Lubbock County from a left-split, left moving thunderstorm during the early evening of May 29, 1987. The tornadoes moved to the north-northwest with the first tornado developing before 6:30 pm and the second around 6:37 pm. The first tornado was sighted by Skywarn spotters as a developing funnel cloud shortly after 6:20 pm. It touched down just north of Farm Road 1585 west of Wolfforth, striking a house and two mobile homes. As the tornado crossed Farm Road 2378, a mile south of Highway 114, it injured a man who was delivering a pizza (from FLYING PIZZA?) He abandoned his vehicle and hid in a ditch, but was thrown about 50 feet. The storm crossed Highway 114 about 1/4 mile west of Farm Road 2378 and struck a number of residences. Two mobile home residents living just north of the highway were injured. The tornado heavily damaged or destroyed a total of seven mobile homes and three houses before lifting at 6:40 pm. (Bill snapped the photo below.)



The second tornado had a brief life on the ground. It was reported as having touched down by DPS troopers at 6:39 pm just south of Hurlwood. It lifted within a minute without doing appreciable damage. This was the tornado that was near the south end of Reese Air Force Base.

The first tornado was rated F2 due to its destruction of roofing and some exterior walls, while tornado number 2, was rated F0. The first tornado had a path length of 8 miles and a maximum width of 80 yards. The second tornado had a path length of 1 mile and a width of just 30 yards.



VIII. FEATURE 3

EXCERPTS FROM: THE GUN AND THE GOSPEL EARLY KANSAS by Chaplain H.D. Fisher, D.D. published by Medical Century Co., 1897

Editor's note: Upon the death of his grandmother, Craig Van Antwerp's father found a book of a distant relative who had written about the life and times of being a chaplain in Kansas during the mid-1800's. In the book, Chaplain H. D. Fisher describes a tornado day on July 4, 1860. The following excerpts are from his book.

A short time prior to the return of my family from Kansas to Ohio, during the very height of the drought, there occurred at Leavenworth, which was then our home, one of those awful tornadoes which are known to characterize unusually long and severe dry weather. It was on the evening of the fourth of July. The day had been unusually hot, so that but little interest was taken in its celebration. The whole face of the earth was parched and burned as if by hot winds from Egypt. Not a drop of rain had fallen for months, and the people were suffering most terribly.



As nightfall became well established, it became apparent that something unusual was about to happen. The horses and cattle were unusually restless, as if apprehensive, the fowls were slow in getting settled on their roosts; even the dogs and cats about the premises showed signs of impending danger, in manifestations of uneasiness and fear. The night birds, flitted swiftly across the lowering sky and the horizon quickly assumed an inky blackness. Out of the awful stillness came a sound as of a rushing torrent, and there soon sprang out fitful gushes of wind which showed that a storm was gathering.

Almost before it was understood that possible danger lurked near, the storm broke in mighty fury and spread wide its destruction. Houses were unroofed and blown down, the county jail was so badly damaged that prisoners were liberated, only to find death in the path of the tornado; trees were torn up by the roots and church spires and roofs were demolished. Three Mile Creek became a raging torrent from a dry ravine in a few minutes, sweeping away a number of houses and drowning a dozen people; such little garden patches as had been nursed through the drought were destroyed by the wind and hail and rain. The inky blackness of the night, only relieved by the most vivid and blinding flashes of lightning, made the situation the more appalling and increased the terror of the already greatly alarmed people.

It seemed as if out of the drought and heat and famine, had come another destroying power to finish the devastation that had been worked on us. It was one of those quickly-come and quickly-go tornadoes which sweep through a narrow stretch of country working a harvest of destruction and death, but which failed to bring permanent relief from drought. And no sooner had the waters which fell from the sky swept off the dry ground into the river beds and been drunk up by the cracked and

broken earth, than was the full force of the blight again upon us. The storm which brought its rain was but a mockery; it had also brought death and damage, and had aroused the fears of the people lest more like destruction should come upon them; truly their lot was a hard one, and most truly do I say it was a courageous people who endured such hardships for the sake of home and life and liberty to this great nation.

During that awful tornado, my wife and children were alone, and as they realized the danger, my wife knelt with our three little boys near the kitchen door in prayer; she had chosen a spot in the garden to which they were to fly in case the house gave signs of falling in upon them, and told the boys to cling to her and lie flat upon the ground, face downward, in the furrows between the lines of blackberry bushes which crossed the garden. Thrice her hand was on the door knob to throw it open, that they might flee for safety. But they were spared; our house withstood the storm, and though terror-stricken and all but destroyed through fear, no harm came to us. The providence which had thus far carried us through the tribulations of pioneer life had again come to our rescue, and my family were spared from disaster and death. "

IX. FUNNEL FUNNY: A Future Airline for Chasers

(Fiction)

Deregulation of the airline industry combined with the popularity of tornado chasing may lead to a future airline just for chasers.





Ragged shelf cloud near Naples, Florida, taken on June 17, 1987. Copyright 1987 Jack 'Thunderhead' Corso.



Cloud-to-cloud and cloud-to-ground lightning taken in May, 1987 Copyright 1987 Jack 'Thunderhead' Corso.
