



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service Forecast Office Chicago
333 W. University Drive
Romeoville, IL 60446-1804

April 24, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Weather Bureau Forecast Center
ATTN: Mr. Fulks

FROM: WBAS O'Hare Intl Airport
(Mr. Stwertnik)

SUBJECT: Report of Investigation of Tornado, Lake Zurich, Illinois

Investigation of Tornado, which struck the Northwest section of Lake Zurich at 1703CST
April 20, 1967.

Personnel contacted:

Police Lt Weessel, Lake Zurich Police Department
Mr. Samuel Burrle, Lake Zurich Civil Defense Director
Mr. Richard Miller, Lake County Civil Defense Director

Other personnel were contacted who were under the direction of the Civil Defense.

Area investigated:

Northwest section of Lake Zurich, known as Lake Zurich Manor, which is bounded on the west by US Highway 12 (Rand Road) and on the north by Miller Road. This section is approximately 1½ miles north-northwest of the main part of Lake Zurich, and is bounded on the east by Vista Road which is the access to the business district of Lake Zurich, and to the north of Miller Road it connects with McHenry Road.

Vista Road and McHenry Road bounds Acorn Acres, which is a subdivision north and northeast of Lake Zurich Manor. Vista Road is on a northerly course from the intersection of Miller Road, and winds on an easterly course through rolling wooded hills for approximately ½ mile, then north to the intersection of McHenry Road.

The area directly northeast from Lake Zurich Manor to Acorn Acres is comprised of open fields and then rolling wooded hills.

Damage:

Damage assessments made by authorities: Estimates at over two million dollars.

Property Damage:

Lake Zurich Manor:
73-80 homes completely destroyed, (frame construction); one elementary school (Seth Paine) destroyed (brick construction), and 200 homes with extensive damage (frame

construction). No count or assessment of automobile damage had been made at this time by the Civil Defense authorities, but this should run into a sizeable sum due to the time element as most residents were on their way home when the tornado struck.

Approximate valuation of the average home is as follows: \$14000 to \$17000, with furnishings and equipment in the homes \$5000 to \$8000, and the valuation of automobiles from \$1500 to \$4500.

Acorn Acres:

A new subdivision north to northeast from Lake Zurich Manor, located among the rolling wooded hills. Damage here is spotty showing that the tornado was dipping down and lifting back up as the path is followed through this area. Some houses showed minor damage, mainly from debris which some next to those were left untouched or else suffered heavy damage. Through the woods, some large trees (1 to 1½ feet in diameter) were splintered while others had little or no damage.

8-12 homes with extensive damage (frame and brick construction) with valuation from \$30000 to \$70000. A farm situated north of McHenry Road near the intersection of Vista Road had extensive damage; the house, outbuilding and barn destroyed. No valuation of this property at this time.

Hawthorne Woods: Situated northeast to east-northeast of Acorn Acres at a distance of approximately two miles and near Gilmer had 8-10 homes with extensive damage. Valuation \$40-\$70000.

Gilmer:

Located in the vicinity of Hawthorne Woods and near the intersection of Illinois Route 63 and Gilmer Road, a distance of approximately two miles northeast to east-northeast of Acorn Acres and approximately four miles northeast of the intersection of US Highway 12 (Rand Road) and the intersection of Miller Road. (Northwest section of Lake Zurich Manor).

Damage at Gilmer: Four houses destroyed (construction unknown), a plastic factory and a brewery destroyed. No estimate of valuation had been made by the Civil Defense authorities at this time.

History and Path of Tornado: It appears that this is a continuation of the storm that had minutes earlier swept through Barrington Hills, a community located a few miles west-southwest to the northwest section of Lake Zurich (Lake Zurich Manor).

A substation and transformer located to the east of US Highway 12 is on the south edge of the storm path. This was evidently knocked out as the storm crossed US Highway 12, and therefore stopping electric clocks in this area at 5:03 PM (1703CST). It moved through rapidly, giving no warning, as it has been described by many residents, without funnel and no noticeable roar until upon them. Many described the storm as heavy low black clouds swirling around and very dark. (This is evidently the low scud that was quite widespread prior to the heavy rain showers and gusty winds noticed over a wide area, and hiding any funnel shaped cloud that would have been recognizable).

Houses immediately south of the path are covered with ugly mud streaks with occasional roof damage or smashed windows, but as you proceed into the path the appearance changes rapidly to collapsed garages, sides of houses and roofs ripped off, to total destruction within a few hundred feet.

This path is in an east northeast to northeast direction with the width of the path from 300 to 400 feet, widening rapidly to encompass over a block in width, and as approaching Miller Road on a diagonal, the path suddenly juts northward to take a church steeple, twist a house askew on its foundation, completely destroying a house and then ripping through the Seth Paine Elementary School, tearing down thick brick walls, twisting steel girders, but leaving interior walls with clocks showing 5:05PM (1705 CST). All this is on the north side of Miller Road and should have been on the extreme northwest side of the path and most of it out of the path of destruction, as houses southwest of the school are standing with extensive to minor damage as you proceed west from the school along Miller Road.

Looking southwest from the Seth Paine school is a view of four to five blocks of total destruction. East and north of the school are open fields strewn with debris with heavy timbers broken and imbedded in the ground. The debris strewn across the open fields are what is left of household furnishings and clothing.

Past the open field begins the rolling wooded hills and the spacious area and homes of Acorn Acres. Here the path is curving slightly to an east northeast direction and as the path skips through the woods there are large trees splintered here and there, with houses being torn apart while another is skipped entirely and damage apparently caused by debris. Here it is evident that the tornado was dipping down then lifting back up and once more dipping down as it climbed the rolling hills until near the top of the rise then once more widespread destruction and damage. Then across McHenry Road ripping through the farm, then northeasterly through woods and across hills and on into Hawthorne Woods and Gilmer to create more misery and destruction.

Persons who were fortunate to have a few seconds warning and made the sanctuary of their crawl space, had only time enough to get in the crawl space before the storm hit their homes. Others who had no warning were caught in their homes with the first indication of danger as the wind and debris hit the homes, then destruction, but were fortunate in that there were few if any serious injuries. Others still were caught in the autos as they were returning home from work, shopping or other errands demanded by this hour of the day. Some were caught as they were driving into their garages, others on the road with the first indication of danger as they were suddenly caught in a barrage of debris which was over as soon as it started, all of this was followed by heavy rain which passed within one to two minutes.

Personal Interviews:

Police Lt Weessel, Lake Zurich Police Department. Aware of Tornado Warning and Tornado Watch, having received first warning at 1420CST. All clocks stopped at 5:03PM (1703CST). Did not observe funnel, but observed line of low black looking clouds moving in from westerly direction.

Mr. John Hutton, 32 Rugby Rd; High School teacher. Stated "Didn't resemble a funnel. Low clouds dropped to ground and swirled around then suddenly debris house." House

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extensively damaged, in path of tornado. Mr. Hutton and family (wife and two daughters) in house at time. No injuries.

Mr. De Rouse, 36 Golf View; High School teacher. At home at time with family and five other high school teachers. No funnel observed just line of black clouds. After storm passed, went to neighbors to offer assistance, and was astounded to see complete destruction of houses across the street from his, and the occupants appear with little or no injuries. House on south edge of path, suffered extensive damage but livable.

Mrs. Belcher, 12 Northcrest. Driving home from shopping, and as she approached the intersection of Gilmer – McHenry Roads debris suddenly hit car. Immediately stopped car. Then sudden heavy rain washing mud and debris from car. Started car and continued home only to see complete destruction of house and garage. Husband's car approximately 75 ft distance from where garage had been. Mr. Belcher had just pulled into garage and set emergency brake prior to getting out when suddenly the garage and roof disappeared. Car bounced up and down by winds, he immediately curled up on car floor and stayed there until sure storm abated. He left car after Mrs. Belcher drove up a short time later.

Allan Thompson (immediately behind Belchers' home); a 16 year old high school student was walking home when he saw black clouds approaching, rushed home, and he and his father got into crawl space as storm hit. Home destroyed. No injuries.

Mr. Ed Monnees, Rte #3 Lake Zurich (Acorn Acres) had just arrived home and was preparing to change clothes when he heard the roar of the storm hit. Family of five started for the crawl space when roof and walls were lifted from the house followed by heavy cold rain. No injuries. A neighbor across the street was helping Mr. Monness salvage items and stated that he also observed storm approaching Acorn Acres. No funnel observed. Low swirling clouds then heard the roar followed by heavy rain. After rain let up, saw Monnees' house damaged. Came over to offer assistance and as he approached their house looked back and noticed that $\frac{3}{4}$ of his house gone. At this time the Monnees family walked out of the front door of their house. No injuries.

A person helping Monness clear debris and salvage possessions stated that he lived $\frac{1}{4}$ mile southeast of Monnees, and had observed the sky as storm approached states that the lower part of the sky was black while upper part was green. Did not observe a funnel and heard no roar. He was outside at the time and had no damage at his place. He again emphasized that the sky was black in the lower part due to debris and mud, and the upper part green.

While in the Office of Civil Defense Director, a member of the school board told of the experience of Mr. Heylock, School Administrator. Mr. Heylock and family were returning home along Illinois Route 63, when tornado hit car, and was picked up and dumped in the ditch. Mr. Heylock and family suffered minor injuries and were treated at the hospital in Libertyville.

CHARLES B. STWERTNIK
Meteorological Technician
O'Hare International Airport

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Chicago, Illinois

Copies to: State Climatologist, Champaign
WBCRH, Kansas City
NSSFC, Kansas City
WBO, Chicago

