UPDATED

Confirmed Tornado
Edgewater Beach-McGregor, Ontario
May 12, 1956

Date- Local: Saturday, May 12th, 1956
UTC: Saturday, May 12th, 1956
Time- Local: 1845
UTC: 2245
Location: Edgewater Beach - McGregor
Region: Windsor – Essex – Chatham - Kent
Classification: Confirmed Tornado
Category: -999
Casualties: None
Track Length: 13720 m
Width: 100 m
Motion: 280 degrees
Damage Estimate: $250000
F-Scale Rating: F3
Code: AH
Damage Survey: None
Spotter Reports: Yes
Other Documents:
Numerous newspaper articles
Synoptic analysis charts (Isobaric, frontal, 500mb)
Map of tornado track
Newark summary sheet

Tornado F-Scale Re-Assessment

Brad L. Rousseau
Tornado Data Production Assistant, Environment Canada
January 26th, 2011

Classification: Confirmed Tornado
Date: Saturday, May 12th, 1956
Location: Edgewater Beach – McGregor, Windsor – Essex – Chatham – Kent Region

Original Assessment: F2
Re-Assessment: F3
F-Code: UH
Explanation of Assessment: Houses destroyed constitutes F3 rating but construction quality unknown therefore remained F3 and not F4

SJS

A TORNADO PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET F=2 (1) ONT

1. DATE AND TIME SAT MAY 12 1956 1745 EST

2. LOCATION OR PATH (attach map) EDGEWATER BEACH TO JUST BEYOND McGREGOR
FROM, APPROX. 290°
06956-01

3. PATH LENGTH ☐ NOT KNOWN ☐ <1mi; ☐ 1-4mi; ☐ 5-10mi; ☐ 11-50mi; [18] LENGTH IF>50mi

4. PATH WIDTH [100 YDS] 5. TORNADO PART OF SQUALL LINE? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN:

6. ANY UNUSUAL COLORATION? ☑ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN

7. ANY UNUSUAL SOUND? ☑ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN

8. IF ANSWER TO 6 OR 7 YES, ELABORATE; (6) SOMETIMES BLACK, SOMETIMES ORANGE
(7) MISS ELLA BOTSFORD HEARD A DRUMMING NOISE AS THE BARN SHE WAS IN WAS DESTROYED, EXCEPT FOR THE CONCRETE LOWER SECTION

9. LIST ANY ASSOCIATED PHENOMENA
(Such as hail, vivid lightning, heavy rain, no rain, etc.) ONLY RAIN MENTIONED

10. TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATE $250,000 11. TOTAL DEATHS NONE

12. TOTAL INJURED 16 13. TOTAL HOMELESS 16?

14. LIST ALL REFERENCES WINDSOR STAR MAY 14, 1956 AND OCT 13 1956
TORONTO STAR, MAY 14 1956
GLOBE AND MAIL, MAY 14 1956

15. SUMMARIZE REMARKS PERTAINING TO (a) FUNNEL; (b) INTERESTING OR CAPRICIOUS EVENTS.
(A) "THE TORNADO'S FAMILIAR AND DARK FUNNEL WHIRLED ACROSS THE DETROIT RIVER INTO ESSEX COUNTY ABOUT 6:45pm AT EDGEWATER BEACH AND MOVED S.E TO JUST BEYOND McGREGOR
WRECKAGE INCLUDED 4 HOMES DESTROYED, 14 BARNS DESTROYED OR DAMAGED 10 TOOL-MACHINE SHEDS DAMAGED OR DESTROYED; A SCHOOL ROOF DESTROYED COUNTLESS GARAGES AND SMALL BUILDINGS TUMBLED, AND ONE WOODEN FARM SILO DESTROYED
GERALD MORRIS COUNTED AS MANY AS FIVE FUNNEL SHAPED CLOUDS JUST BEFORE THE TORNADO STRUCK THE MORRIS FARM
ANOTHER WITNESS SAW THE TORNADO CLOUD WHIP OUT OF THE SKY LIFTING THE WATER AT TURKEY CREEK "RIGHT INTO THE SKY"

AT THE HOME OF JOSEPH DAILAIRE ALL THE CARPETS ON THE LOWER FLOOR WERE FOUND ROLLED UP AT THE REAR OF THE HOUSE
A HOME DISAPPEARED LEAVING THE OWNER STILL SITTING IN THE KITCHEN CHAIR HE OCCUPIED WHEN THE HOUSE WAS STRUCK AND RATTLED TO PIECES.
IN DOZENS OF CASES WIND TOSSED BARN AND SHED TIMBERS CAME PELTING THROUGH WINDOWS OF HOUSES AND FAMILIES DUCKED TO AVOID INJURY.
AT THE McKINNON FARM, IN A MATTER OF MINUTES THE ROOF WAS TORN FROM PART OF THE HOUSE AND THE BARN FLATTENED
A MANURE SPREADER WHICH HAD BEEN INSIDE THE BARN WAS LYING ABOUT 150' AWAY UPSIDE DOWN
AT THE HOME OF MR CLEMENT GIGNAC A CREAM SEPARATOR WHICH HAD BEEN BOLTED TO THE FLOOR WAS LYING IN THE BACKYARD 200' FROM THE HOUSE

TORNADO PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

(2) ONT

1. DATE AND TIME SAT MAY 12 1956 1845 EDT

2. LOCATION OR PATH
(attach map)

3. PATH LENGTH ☐ NOT KNOWN ☐ <1mi; ☐ 1-4mi; ☐ 5-10mi; ☐ 11-50mi; ☐ LENGTH IF>50mi

4. PATH WIDTH ☐ 5. TORNADO PART OF SQUALL LINE? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN:

6. ANY UNUSUAL COLORATION? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN

7. ANY UNUSUAL SOUND? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN

8. IF ANSWER TO 6 OR 7 YES, ELABORATE;

9. LIST ANY ASSOCIATED PHENOMENA
(Such as hail, vivid lightning heavy rain, no rain, etc.)

10. TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATE $ 11. TOTAL DEATHS

12. TOTAL INJURED 13. TOTAL HOMELESS

14. LIST ALL REFERENCES

15. SUMMARIZE REMARKS PERTAINING TO (a) FUNNEL; (b) INTERESTING OR CAPRICIOUS EVENTS.

THE HOUSE OF MR HASWELL HAD SHELVES TORN OFF THE WALL FURNITURE WAS STREWN ABOUT AND EARLY SUNDAY MORNING MRS HASWELL WAS TRYING TO FIND THE OTHER HALF OF AN INSURANCE POLICY AROUND THE BACK YARD.
"IT SAYS WERE COVERED UNDER ITEMS 1 AND 2 BUT ITEMS ARE MISSING FROM THE REST OF THE POLICY" SHE SAID.

WORKSHEET 0695601

C 500 m
Standard Error S_x

ORIGIN x 17325300
y 4667600

ℓ 2000 m
W 1000

R 408 m
Standard Error S_y

LIFT-OFF x_1 17341600
y_1 4663600

$(x_1 - x)$ = 16300
$(y - y_1)$ = 4000

DAMAGE LENGTH

$$L = [(x_1 - x)^2 + (y - y_1)]^{1/2}$$

= 16784

Standard Error $S_L = (S_x^2 + S_y^2)^{1/2}$

= 645 C

$$\beta = \frac{S_L}{57.29 L}$$

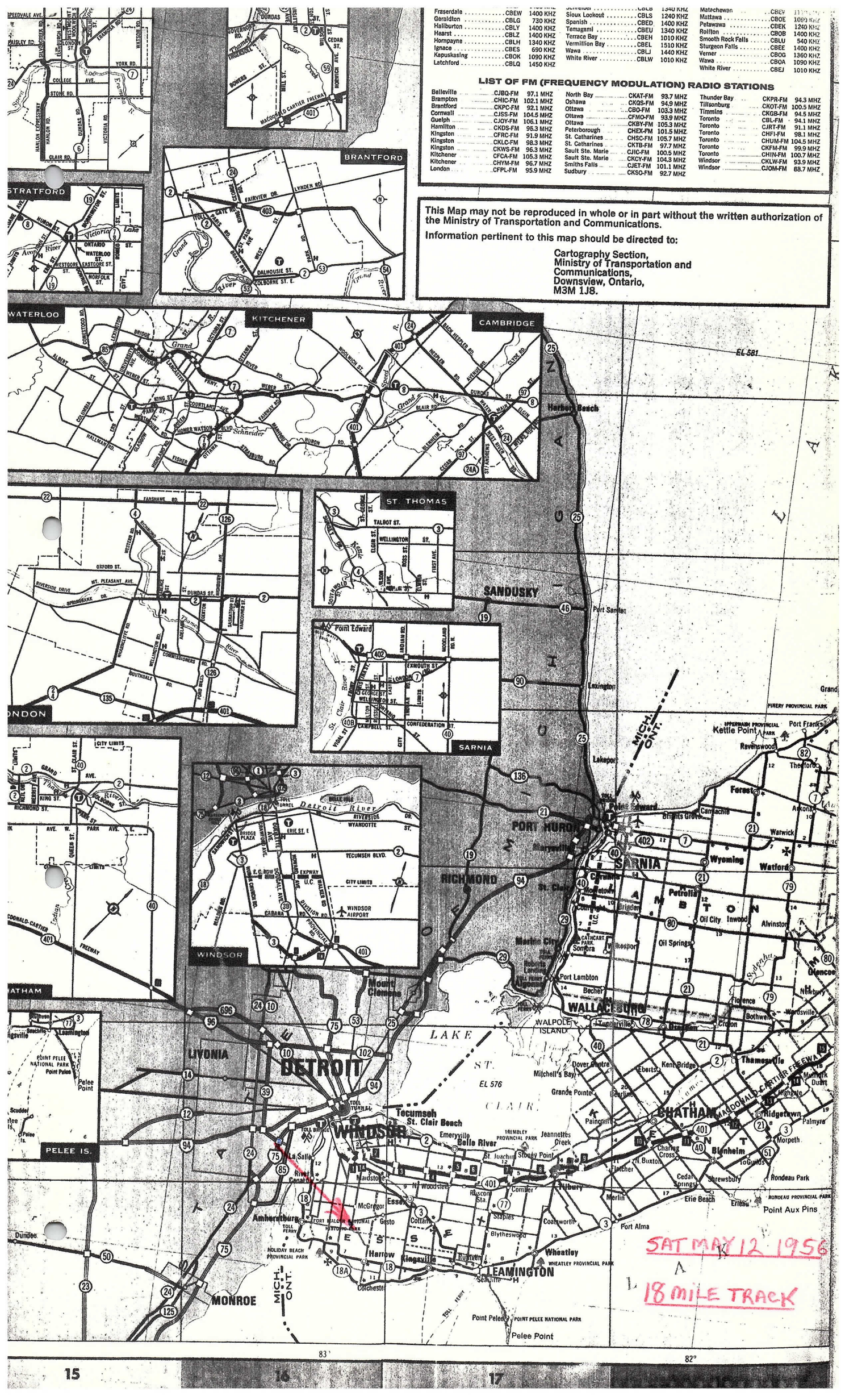
= 2°

$$\alpha = \tan^{-1} \frac{|y - y_1|}{|x - x_1|} = 13.8°$$

NE Quad $\phi = 90 - \alpha$
NW Quad $\phi = 270 + \alpha$
SW quad $\phi = 270 - \alpha$

SE quad $\phi = 90 + \alpha$

ϕ = 284°


Fraserdale CBEW 1400 KHZ
Geraldton CBLG 730 KHZ
Haliburton CBLY 1400 KHZ
Hearst CBLZ 1400 KHZ
Hornpayne CBLH 1340 KHZ
Ignace CBES 690 KHZ
Kapuskasing CBOK 1090 KHZ
Latchford CBLQ 1450 KHZ
Sioux Lookout CBLS 1240 KHZ
Spanish CBED 1400 KHZ
Temagami CBEU 1340 KHZ
Terrace Bay CBEH 1010 KHZ
Vermillion Bay CBEL 1510 KHZ
Wawa CBLJ 1440 KHZ
White River CBLW 1010 KHZ
Matachewan CBEY
Mattawa CBOE 1090 KHZ
Petawawa CBEK 1240 KHZ
Rolfton CBOB 1400 KHZ
Smooth Rock Falls CBLU 540 KHZ
Sturgeon Falls CBEE 1400 KHZ
Verner CBOG 1360 KHZ
Wawa CBOA 1090 KHZ
White River CBEJ 1010 KHZ
LIST OF FM (FREQUENCY MODULATION) RADIO STATIONS
Belleville CJBQ-FM 97.1 MHZ
Brampton CHIC-FM 102.1 MHZ
Brantford CKPC-FM 92.1 MHZ
Cornwall CJSS-FM 104.5 MHZ
Guelph CJOY-FM 106.1 MHZ
Hamilton CKDS-FM 96.3 MHZ
Kingston CFRC-FM 91.9 MHZ
Kingston CKLC-FM 98.3 MHZ
Kingston CKWS-FM 96.3 MHZ
Kitchener CFCA-FM 105.3 MHZ
Kitchener CHYM-FM 96.7 MHZ
London CFPL-FM 95.9 MHZ
North Bay CKAT-FM 93.7 MHZ
Oshawa CKQS-FM 94.9 MHZ
Ottawa CBO-FM 103.3 MHZ
Ottawa CFMO-FM 93.9 MHZ
Ottawa CKBY-FM 105.3 MHZ
Peterborough CHEX-FM 101.5 MHZ
St. Catharines CHSC-FM 105.7 MHZ
St. Catharines CKTB-FM 97.7 MHZ
Sault Ste. Marie CJIC-FM 100.5 MHZ
Sault Ste. Marie CKCY-FM 104.3 MHZ
Smiths Falls CJET-FM 101.1 MHZ
Sudbury CKSO-FM 92.7 MHZ
Thunder Bay CKPR-FM 94.3 MHZ
Tillsonburg CKOT-FM 100.5 MHZ
Timmins CKGB-FM 94.5 MHZ
Toronto CBL-FM 94.1 MHZ
Toronto CJRT-FM 91.1 MHZ
Toronto CHFI-FM 98.1 MHZ
Toronto CHUM-FM 104.5 MHZ
Toronto CKFM-FM 99.9 MHZ
Toronto CHIN-FM 100.7 MHZ
Windsor CKLW-FM 93.9 MHZ
Windsor CJOM-FM 88.7 MHZ
This Map may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the written authorization of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications.
Information pertinent to this map should be directed to:
Cartography Section,
Ministry of Transportation and Communications,
Downsview, Ontario,
M3M 1J8.
BRANTFORD
STRATFORD
WATERLOO
KITCHENER
CAMBRIDGE
ST. THOMAS
SANDUSKY
SARNIA
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CHATHAM
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LONDON
PORT HURON
DETROIT
WALLACEBURG
LEAMINGTON
RICHMOND
LIVONIA
MONROE
Detroit River
LAKE ST. CLAIR
Harbor Beach
Port Sanilac
Lexington
Grand Bend
Kettle Point
Port Franks
Ravenswood
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Oil City
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Dover Centre
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N. Buxton
Fletcher
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Shrewsbury
Rondeau Park
Merlin
Erie Beach
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Point Aux Pins
Port Alma
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Comber
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Tecumseh
St. Clair Beach
Belle River
Emeryville
Jeannettes Creek
Stoney Point
St. Joachim
Puce
Maidstone
Essex
McGregor
Amherstburg
Gesto
Cottam
Staples
Coatsworth
Blytheswood
Wheatley
Harrow
Kingsville
Ruthven
Colchester
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Pelee Point
Mouth Clemens
Dundee
Scudder
Learnington
Seacliff
Tilbury
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Savage Twister Slams McGregor, Tramples Farms

Demolished
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MAY 14 1956

16 Injured, Toll $250,000 As Wind Flattens Buildings

(See Other Pictures, Stories—Pages 3, 5, 7, 20, 21 and 37)

Tornadoes

By TED DOUGLAS and ERNIE BEZAIRE
Star Staff Reporters

Cleanup crews were working today in the wake of a blasting tornado that skipped through Anderdon Township Saturday night, injuring 16 people, smashing houses, barns and sheds and causing damage estimated at $250,000.

No one was killed.

The tornado's familiar and feared dark funnel whirled across the Detroit River into Essex County about 6:45 p.m.

The big, swirling vortex exploded barns into matchwood and ripped houses to pieces. In one case, a home disappeared, leaving the owner still sitting in the kitchen chair he occupied when the house was struck and rattled to pieces.

In case after case, heavy barn timbers tumbled, but cattle and other animals struggled out of the wreckage, unscathed.

Of the 16 injured, 14 were in one house when the big twister thundered down on Walker Rd., three miles south of McGregor and 16 miles south of Windsor. All the injured were struck in this one area, where the heavy damage took place.

The injured were:

Charles Root, Jr., 25, owner of the house in which 14 of the 16 persons were injured. He may have a fractured back.

Betty Root, 31, wife of Charles, chest injuries.

Catherine Jean Root, two months, daughter of Charles, shock.

Mary Alice Root, 3, daughter of Charles, minor injuries. She has been released from hospital.

Sidney, 4½, son of Charles, minor injuries. He was released from hospital.

Albert Tarcela, 52, of 389 Church St., a relative of

See McGREGOR—Page 6

6·45 PM
SAT MAY 12 1956

The Windsor Star Library

Torn

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(Concluded from Page One)

Charles, minor injuries, released from hospital.

Mrs. Charles Root Sr., 45, mother of Charles Jr., minor injuries, released after treatment.

A family of seven, in the Root home at the time, suffered minor injuries and were released after treatment. They are Calvin "Pete" Harvey, 25, of Sandwich West; his wife, Jean; their children, Ralph, 3, Ann, two months, Barbara, 10, Darel, 5, and Walter, 9.

Those hurt in the second house which was flattened (the property of Ernest Dorey, 56), included Mrs. Faye Wall, 52, housekeeper, chest injuries.

Leonard Colombo, 10, son of Abbie Colombo, McGregor, grandson of Mrs. Wall, minor injuries. He has been released by hospital.

All the injured were taken to Metropolitan General Hospital in Windsor.

The destroyed houses included, home of Ernest Dorey, three miles south of McGregor; home of Charles Root, three miles south of McGregor; home of Mrs. Colin Botsford, Concession 6, Anderdon; and an unoccupied place three miles south of McGregor.

The tornado struck with most families around the dinner table. The twister hit Allan Park, Mich., then raced across the Detroit River at Edgewater Beach, three miles north of Amherstburg.

The sometimes black, sometimes orange vortex, cut a slash across Anderdon from the northwest to the southeast of the township, blowing itself out just beyond McGregor.

Reeve Eugene Whalen of Anderdon said: "It was miraculous. Thank God nobody was killed." Sunday, he surveyed the wreckage which included four homes destroyed; 14 barns destroyed or damaged; 10 tool-machine sheds demaged or destroyed; a school roof destroyed; countless garages and small buildings tumbled; and one wooden farm silo destroyed.

In dozens of cases, wind-tossed barn and shed timbers came pelting through windows of homes, and families ducked to avoid injury. Window damage was so extensive it is beyond estimate.

Barns, silos, implement sheds and chicken coops took a beating all through the area. On the farm of Grant and Gerald Morris near New Canaan the twister ripped a 60-by-36-foot barn, scattering it through the fields. Left exposed to the rain were the seed grain, 200 bushels of soy beans, 150 bushels of wheat and 100 bushels of oats.

Tarpaulins were placed over the grain by neighbors to keep it from getting wet and it was being transferred to another building nearby today.

Gerald Morris, who was looking out of a window in the basement when the twister struck, counted as many as five funnel shaped clouds just before the tornado struck the Morris farm. The wind blew in a window of the house, and moved a partition between two rooms, knocking part of it down.

Across the road from the Morris farm, Nicholas Gardner's barn blew down on two cows and a tractor. Mr. Gardner was in Windsor at the time the tornado struck. He hurried home and about a quarter mile from his house, his car struck a transformer which was lying on a Hydro pole stretched across the road. The whole underpart of the car, frame and front end

said he saw the tornado cloud whip out of the sky lifting the water at Turkey Creek "right into the sky."

Striking at about 6:45 p.m. Saturday it grabbed Bud Wollison's fish and tackle and snack bar and hurled them through the air.

No one was near the store but damage is expected to run to about $3,000. Mr. Wollison is reported to have left the store about 30 minutes before the tornado smashed his business.

Damage included two refrigerator units, several hundred dollars' worth of stock, $400 worth of fishing licences and other goods.

Along the New Canaan Road, it was the same story on practically every farm. At Don McKinnon's farm, also on the New Canaan Road, Mrs. McKinnon was cooking supper for her husband and eight children—ranging from 11 years to three months—when the windows caved in. In a matter of minutes, the roof was torn from part of the house and the barn flattened. A manure spreader which had been inside the barn was lying about 150 feet away upside down.

On the farm of Alois Rada and John Zatorsky, the twister ripped the roof from two mushroom houses from which a crop was being harvested.

Metro Ostrowercha and his wife, Stella, estimated the tornado damage on their farm at $25,000. From the back porch of Metro's home, a garage, a corn crib, a barn and a pig pen were flattened. Six head of cattle in the barn escaped. After it was all over, a sow who was separated from her litter was found in the middle of a field. The terrified animal lay along side of the back steps and refused to move.

In the house when the twister struck were Mr. and Mrs. Ostrowescha, their son, Pete, 17, 16-year-old Mike and Mary, 14. A grandson, Gary Ostrowercha, of 1030 Cadillac St., Windsor, was visiting at the Ostrowercha home. No one was hurt despite flying glass which smashed windows in the front of the house.

At the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clement Gignac, also on the New Canaan Road, the roof was ripped from the house, the barn levelled and an implement shed was strewn about. A summer kitchen was ripped from the side of the Gignac home and a cream separator which had been bolted to the floor was lying in the back yard 200 feet from the house.

The interior of the Gignac home was a shambles of broken glass and disarranged furniture. Mr. and Mrs. Gignac and their five children were in the house when the tornado struck.

On the farm of Nicholas Telek, 69, 14 cows were extricated from the wreckage of a barn. Not one of the cows was seriously hurt, but the dairy barn will have to be rebuilt. Sunday morning, the milker which had been in the barn couldn't be operated and all 14 animals had to be milked by hand.

First warning of the tornado for Mr. and Mrs. Bert Boismier, Walker Rd., occurred when debris from the barn of Fred Cowley, on the north side of Walker, started to crash through the front windows of the Boismier home.

"There were pieces of lumber swirling through the air from that barn," Mr. Boismier said. "I looked next door and the family of my neighbor, Charles Root, was huddled on the floor, but the walls were gone."

At the home of Joseph Dallaire, next door to the Boismiers, all the carpets on the lower floor were found rolled up at the rear of the house. Considerable damage was done inside.

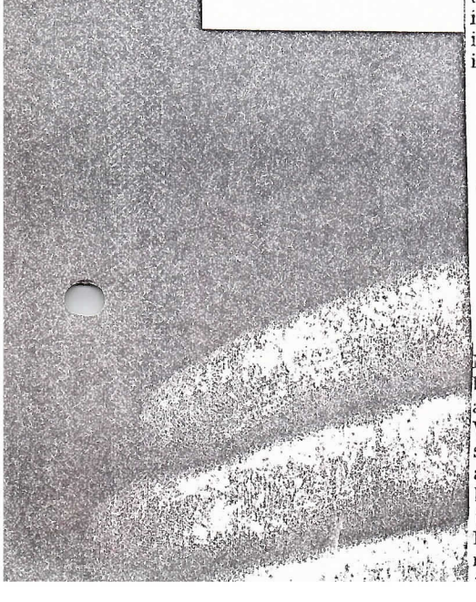
Mrs. Ada Botsford, 79, Concession 6, Anderdon, was sitting in the living room of her home. Her son, Donald, and his wife and daughter were home from Milwaukee for Mother's Day. The twister uprooted a few cedars in the front yard, tore the front part of the house from the rear and moved it off the foundation about 12 feet.

Miss Ella Botsford, Mrs. Botsford's daughter, was in the barn looking after 11 head of cattle and a pony. She says she heard a drumming noise. When she came out of the barn the upper structure was scattered across the fields, and only the concrete lower section remained.

Next door, at the home of Chester Thrasher, where a wall was blown out of the barn, Mr Thrasher and his four children took to the ditch in front of the house.

Also on Concession 6, only the foundation was left of the barn of William Thrasher. Some of the cement block wall at the rear of the barn was knocked out.

Mr. Thrasher estimated his loss at $15,000 on the barn alone. The wind blew a chicken house over, moved another one 30 feet off the foundation, and levelled two silos.





By Windsor

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Barns, silos, implement sheds and chicken coops took a beating all through the area. On the farm of Grant and Gerald Morris near New Canaan the twister ripped a 60-by-38-foot barn, scattering it through the fields. Left exposed to the rain were the seed grain, 200 bushels of soy beans, 150 bushels of wheat and 100 bushels of oats.

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Stan Haswell and his wife, Martha, were in their home a few doors down the road when the tornado hit tearing shelves off the wall.

Mr. Haswell was cut about the head by flying glass. Furniture was strewn about and early Sunday morning Mrs. Haswell was trying to find the other half of an insurance policy around the back yard.

"It says we're covered under items one and two, but the items are missing from the rest of the policy," she said.

Swooping over the district the funnel-shaped cloud picked up a fishing store and shack near Turkey Creek and dumped them upside down in the water more than 100 feet. from where they had been ripped from foundations.

Arthur Cooper of LaSalle ter of minutes, the roof was torn from part of the house and the barn flattened. A manure spreader which had been inside the barn was lying about 150 feet away upside down.

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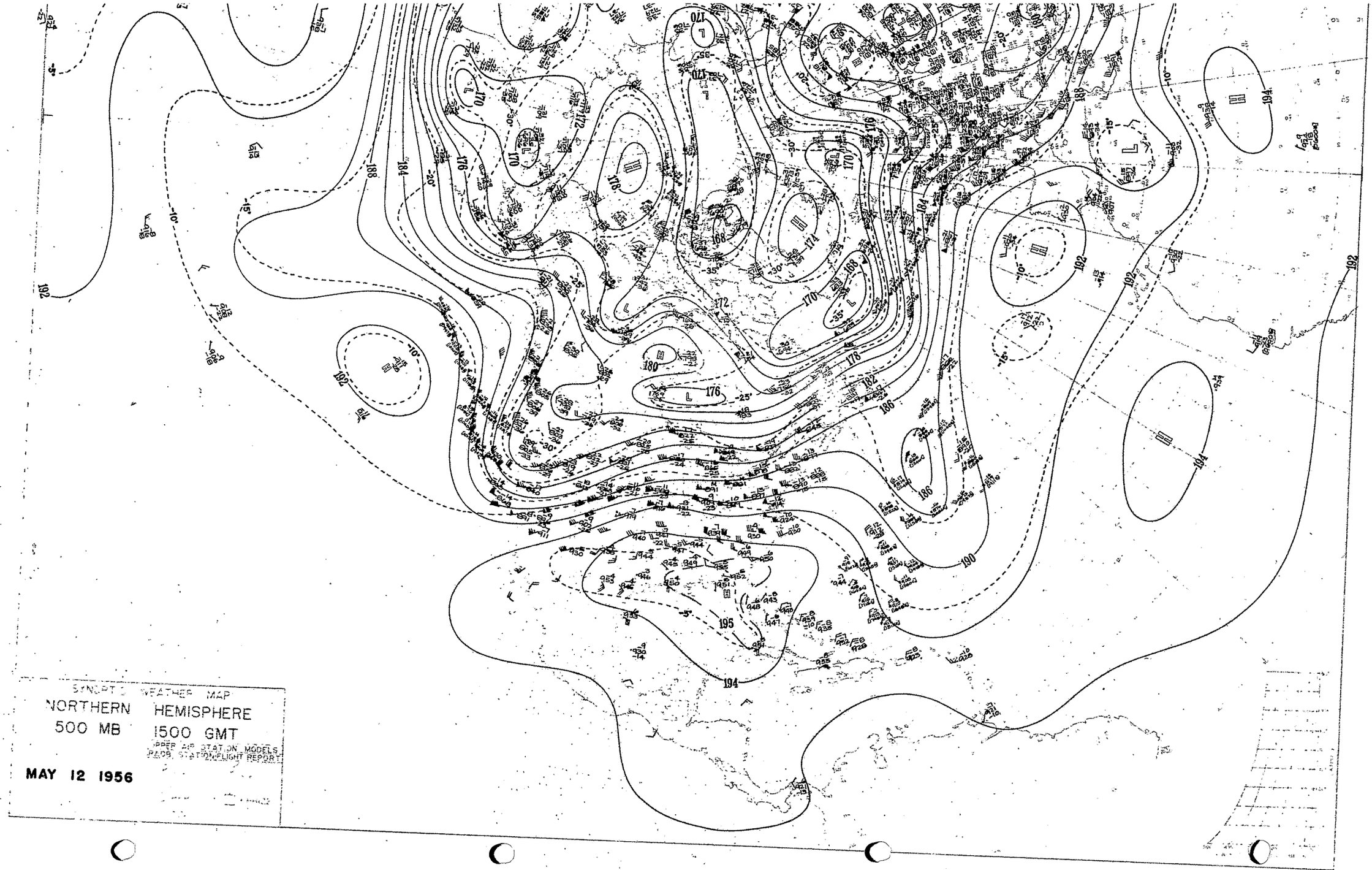
Mrs. Ada Botsford, 79, Concession 6, Anderdon, was sitting in the living room of her home. Her son, Donald, and his wife and daughter were home from Milwaukee for Mother's Day. The twister uprooted a few cedars in the front yard, tore the front part of the house from the rear and moved it off the foundation about 12 feet.

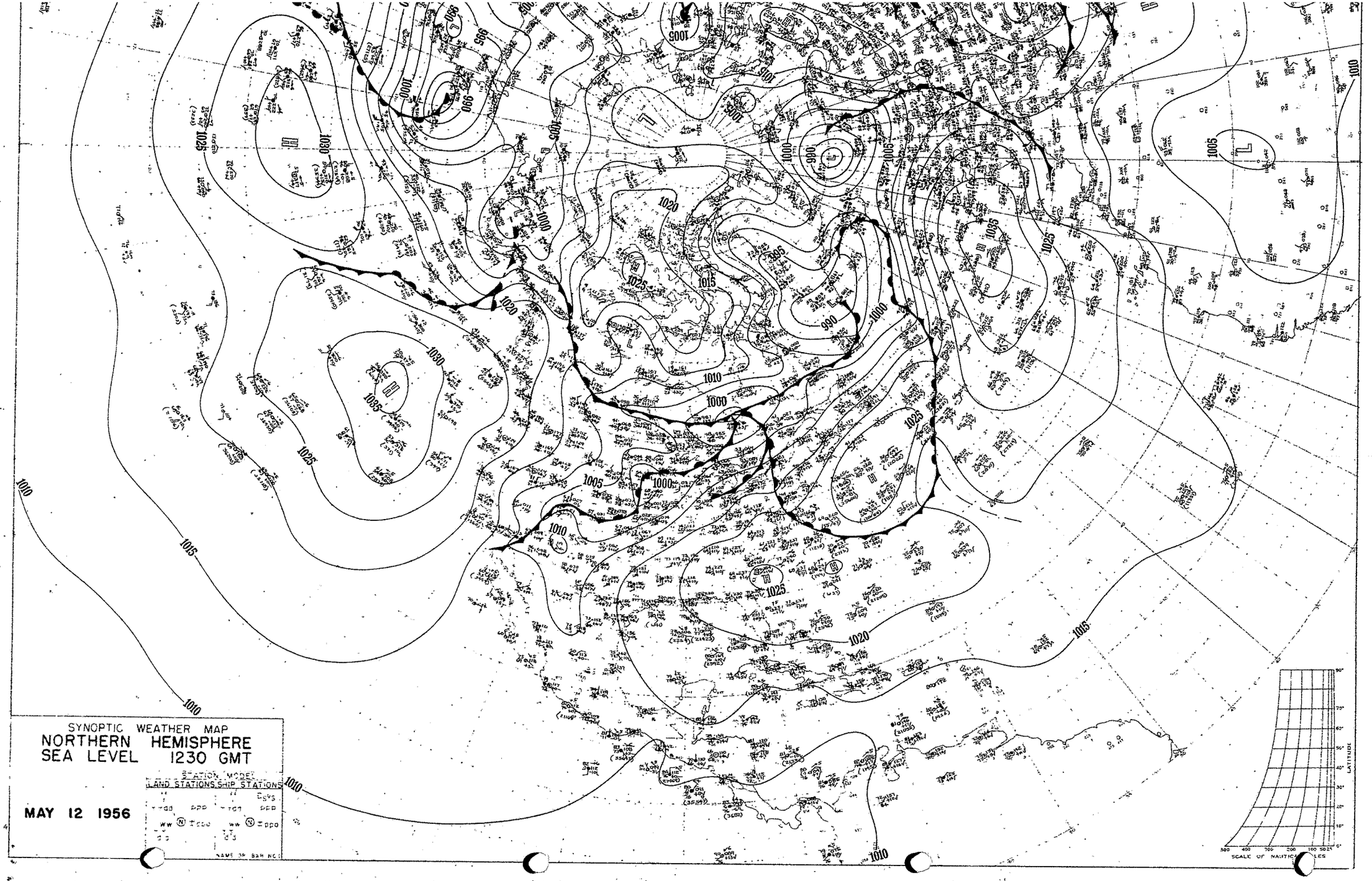
Miss Ella Botsford, Mrs. Botsford's daughter, was in the barn looking after 11 head of cattle and a pony. She says she heard a drumming noise. When she came out of the barn the upper structure was scattered across the fields, and only the concrete lower section remained.

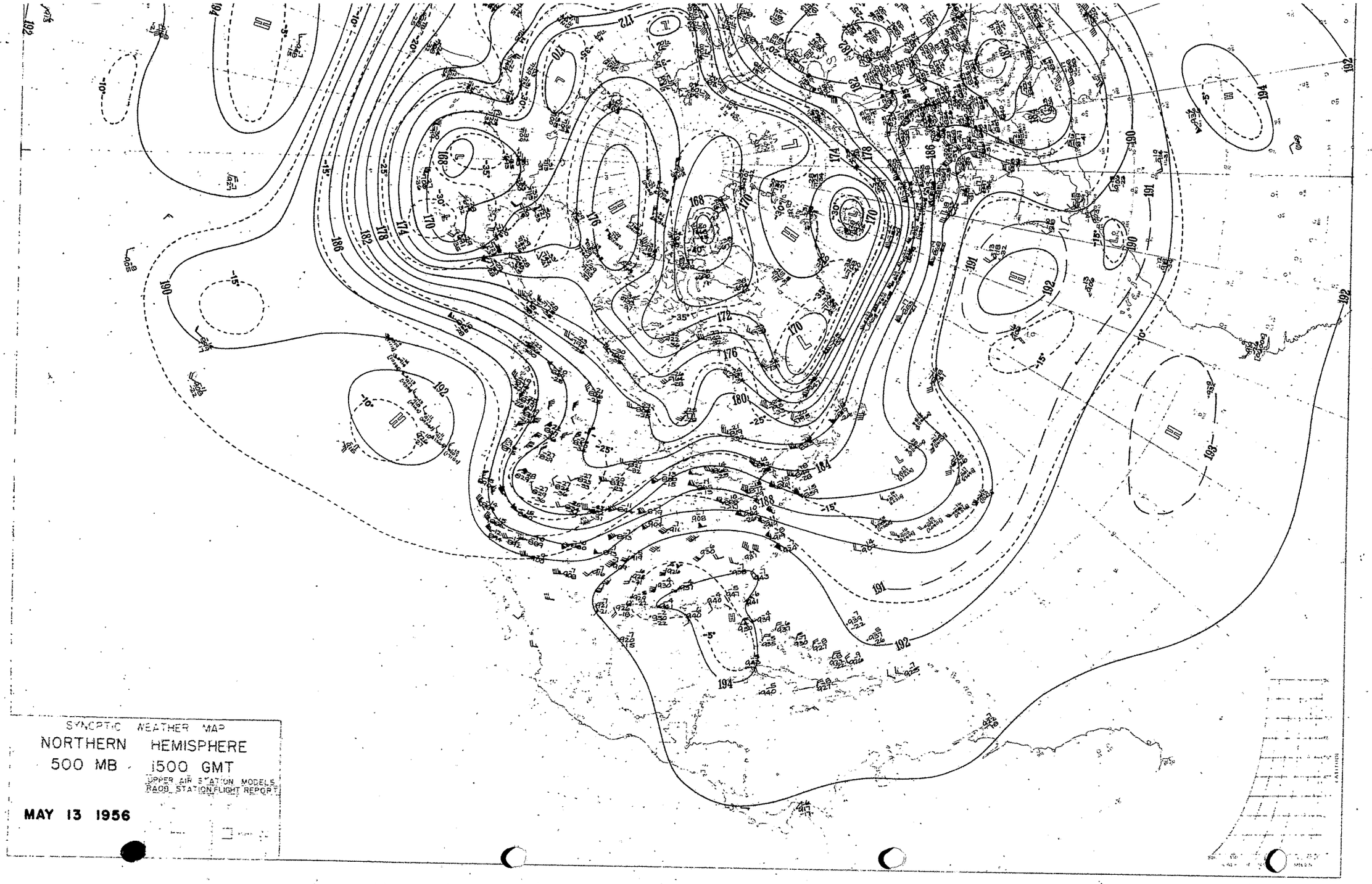
Next door, at the home o Chester Thrasher, where a wal was blown out of the barn, Mr Thrasher and his four children took to the ditch in front of the house.

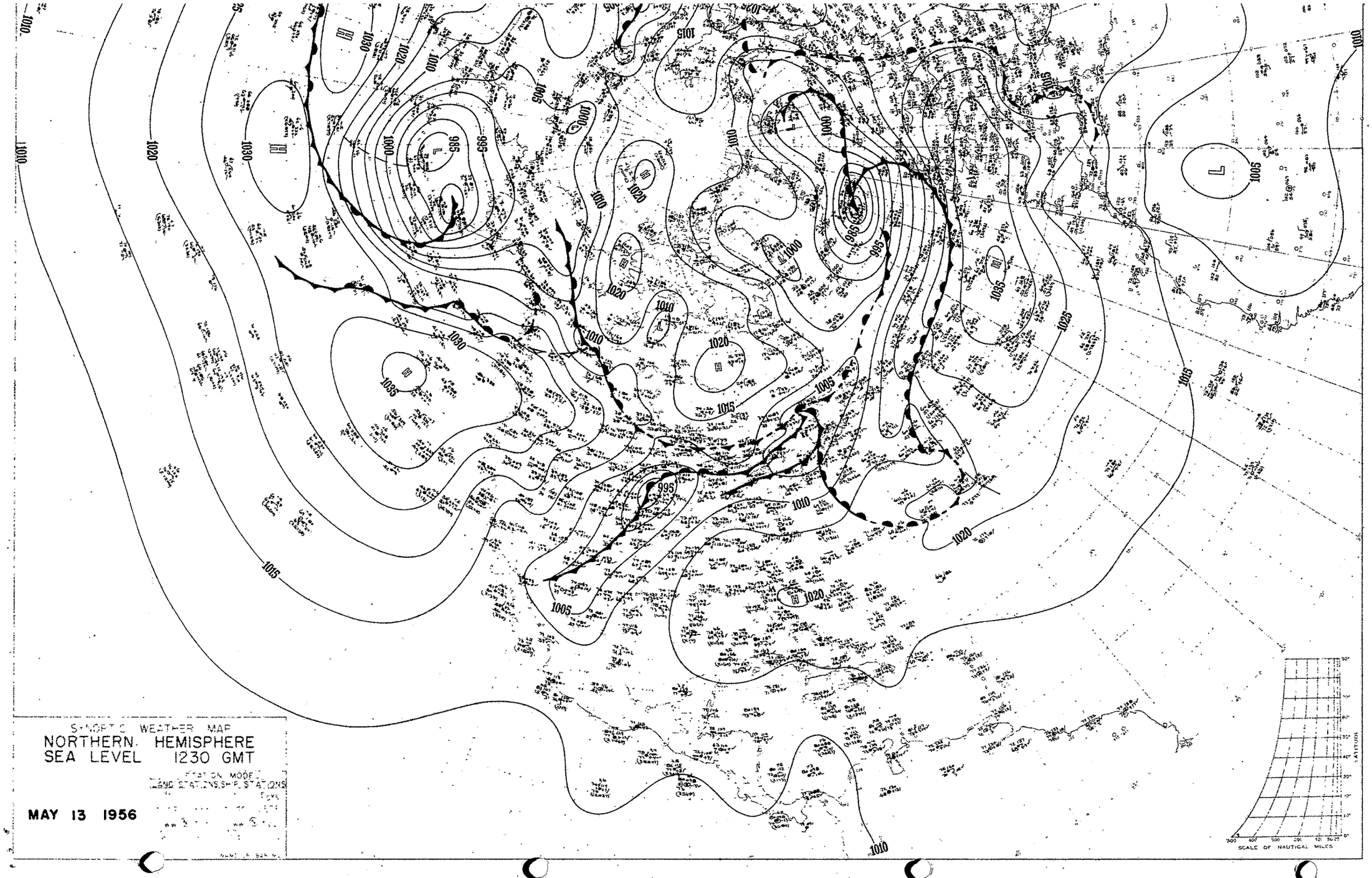
Also on Concession 6, only the foundation was left of the barn of William Thrasher. Some of the cement block wall at the rear of the barn was knocked out.

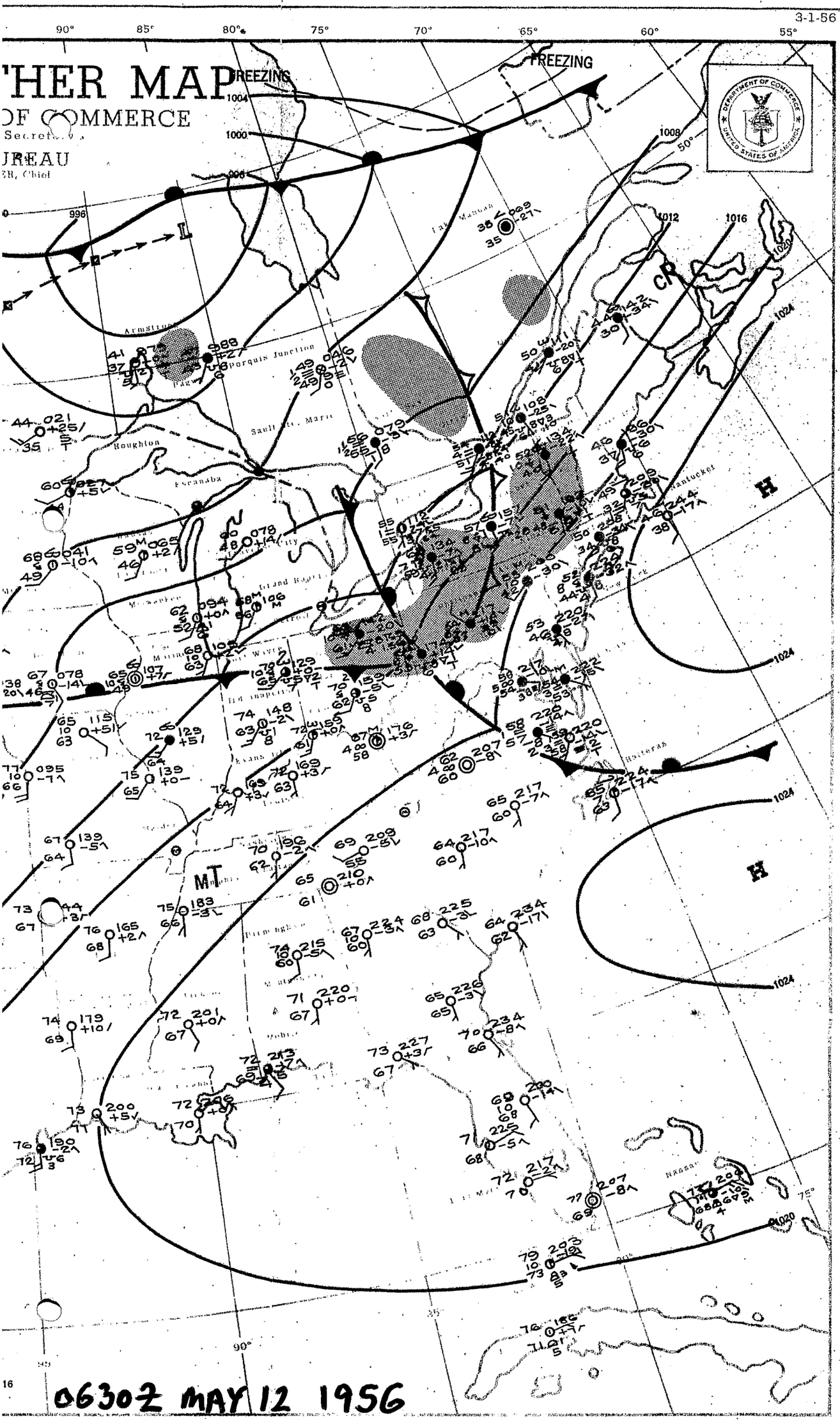
Mr. Thrasher estimated his loss at $15,000 on the barn alone. The wind blew a chicken house over, moved another one 30 feet off the foundation, and levelled two silos.


SYNOPTIC WEATHER MAP
NORTHERN HEMISPHERE
500 MB 1500 GMT
UPPER AIR STATION MODELS
PAOB STATION FLIGHT REPORT
MAY 12 1956


SYNOPTIC WEATHER MAP
NORTHERN HEMISPHERE
SEA LEVEL 1230 GMT
MAY 12 1956
STATION MODEL
LAND STATIONS SHIP STATIONS
SCALE OF NAUTICAL MILES
LATITUDE


SYNOPTIC WEATHER MAP
NORTHERN HEMISPHERE
500 MB 1500 GMT
UPPER AIR STATION MODELS
RAOB STATION FLIGHT REPORT
MAY 13 1956

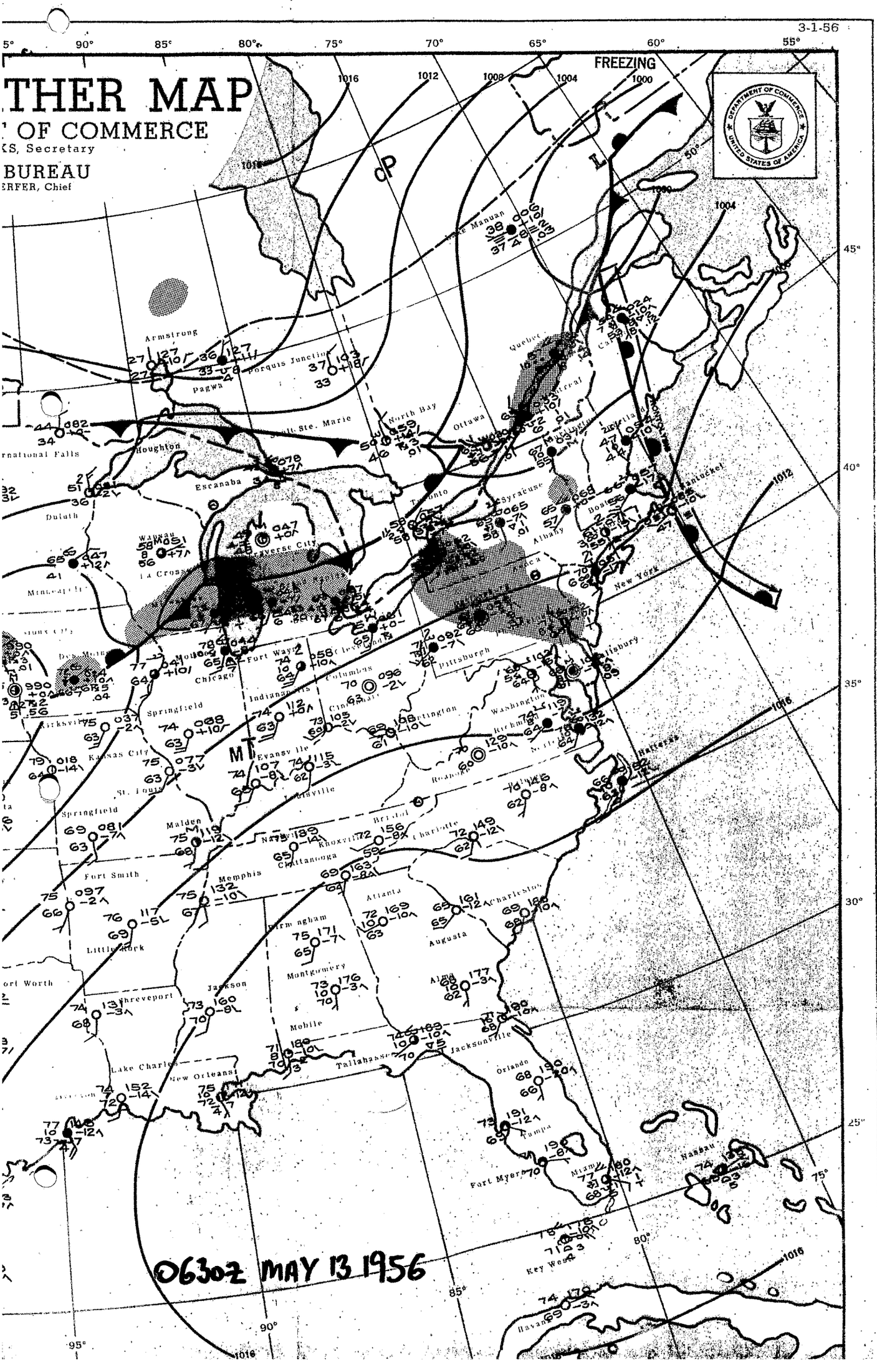

SYNOPTIC WEATHER MAP
NORTHERN HEMISPHERE
SEA LEVEL 1230 GMT
MAY 13 1956
SCALE OF NAUTICAL MILES

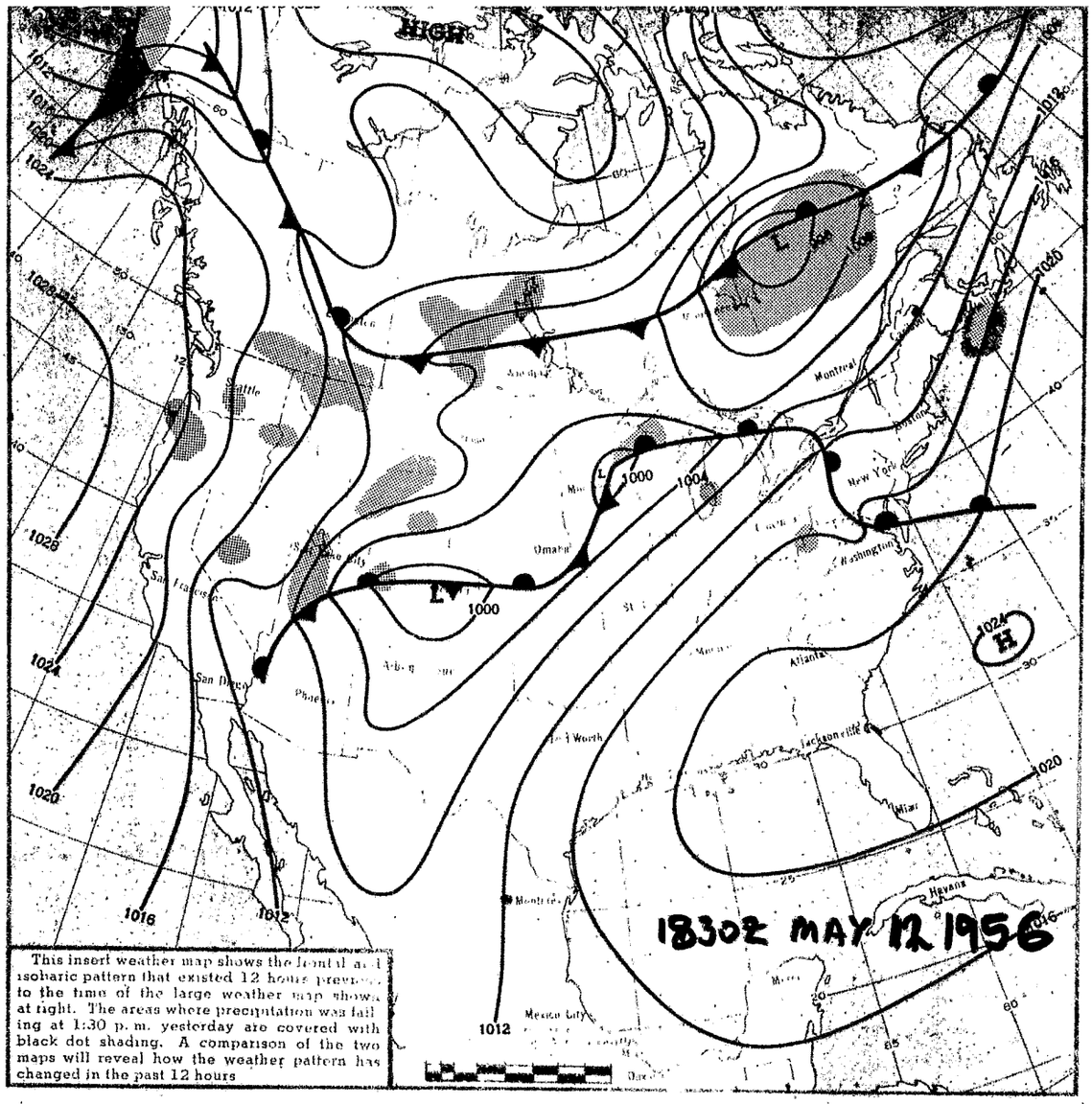


06302 MAY 12 1956

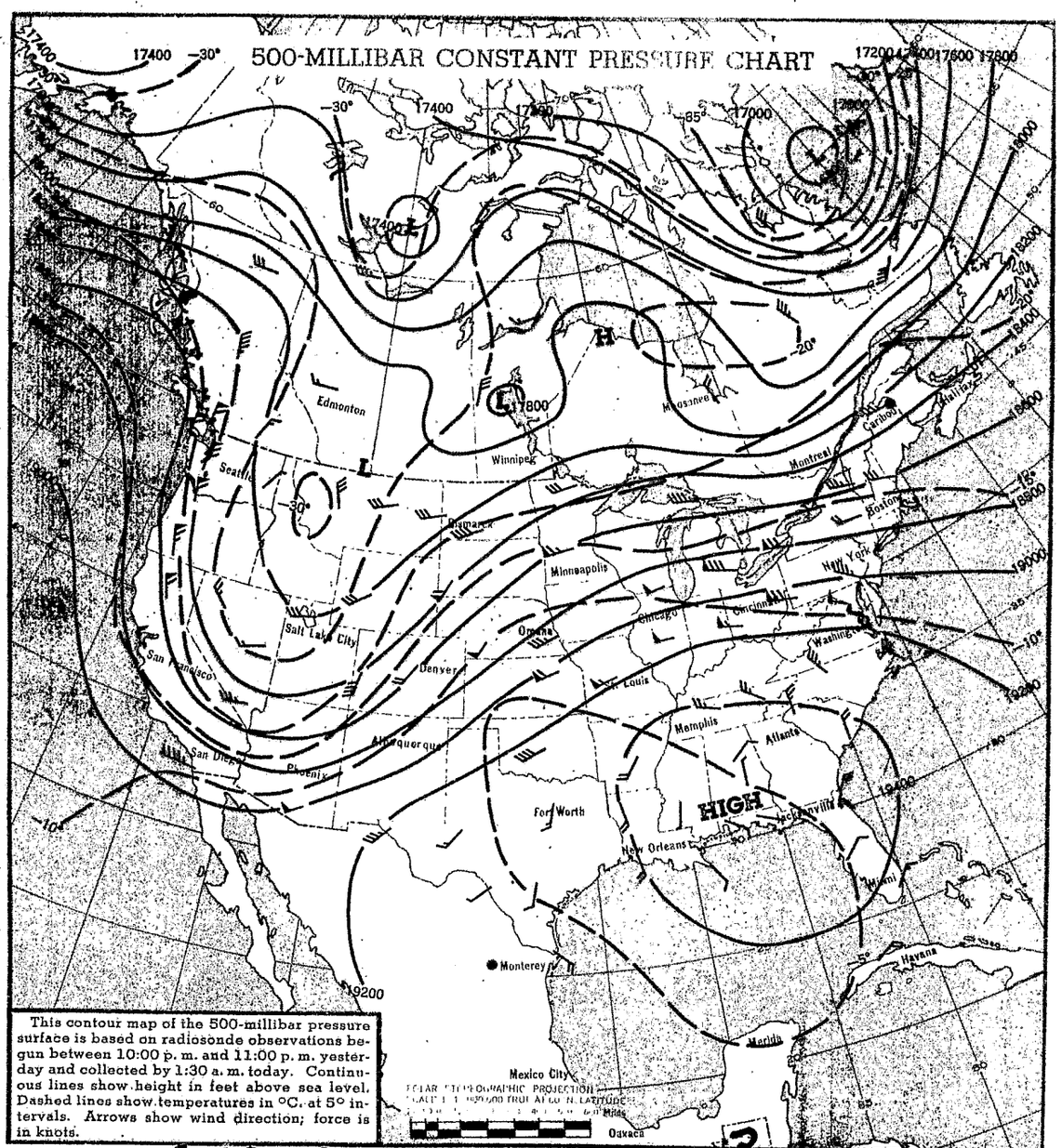
SATURDAY, MAY 12, 1956

PRECIPITATION AREAS AND AMOUNTS


3-1-56
THER MAP
OF COMMERCE
KS, Secretary
BUREAU
ERFER, Chief
FREEZING
1016
1012
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1004
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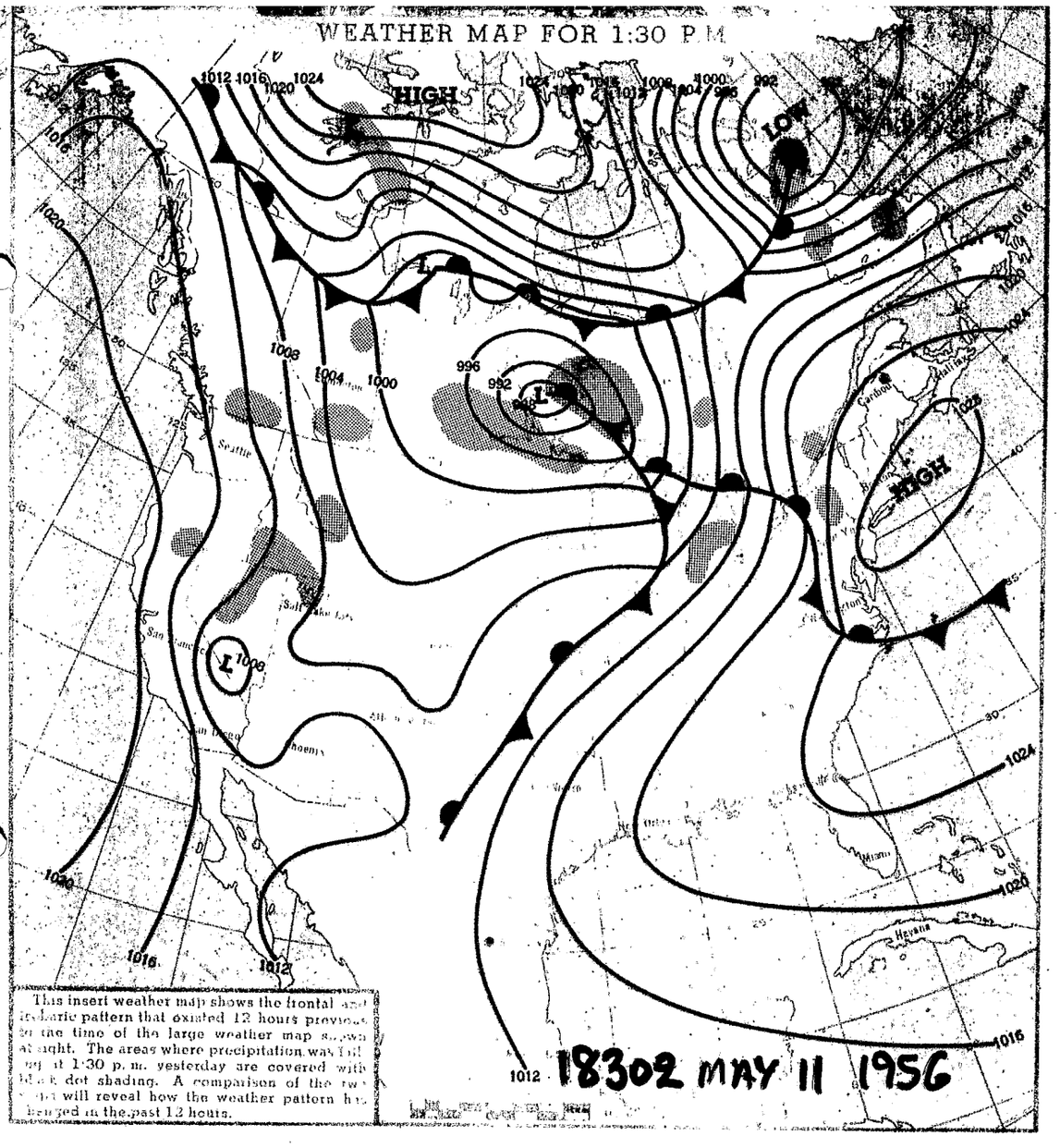


This insert weather map shows the frontal and isobaric pattern that existed 12 hours previous to the time of the large weather map shown at right. The areas where precipitation was falling at 1:30 p. m. yesterday are covered with black dot shading. A comparison of the two maps will reveal how the weather pattern has changed in the past 12 hours

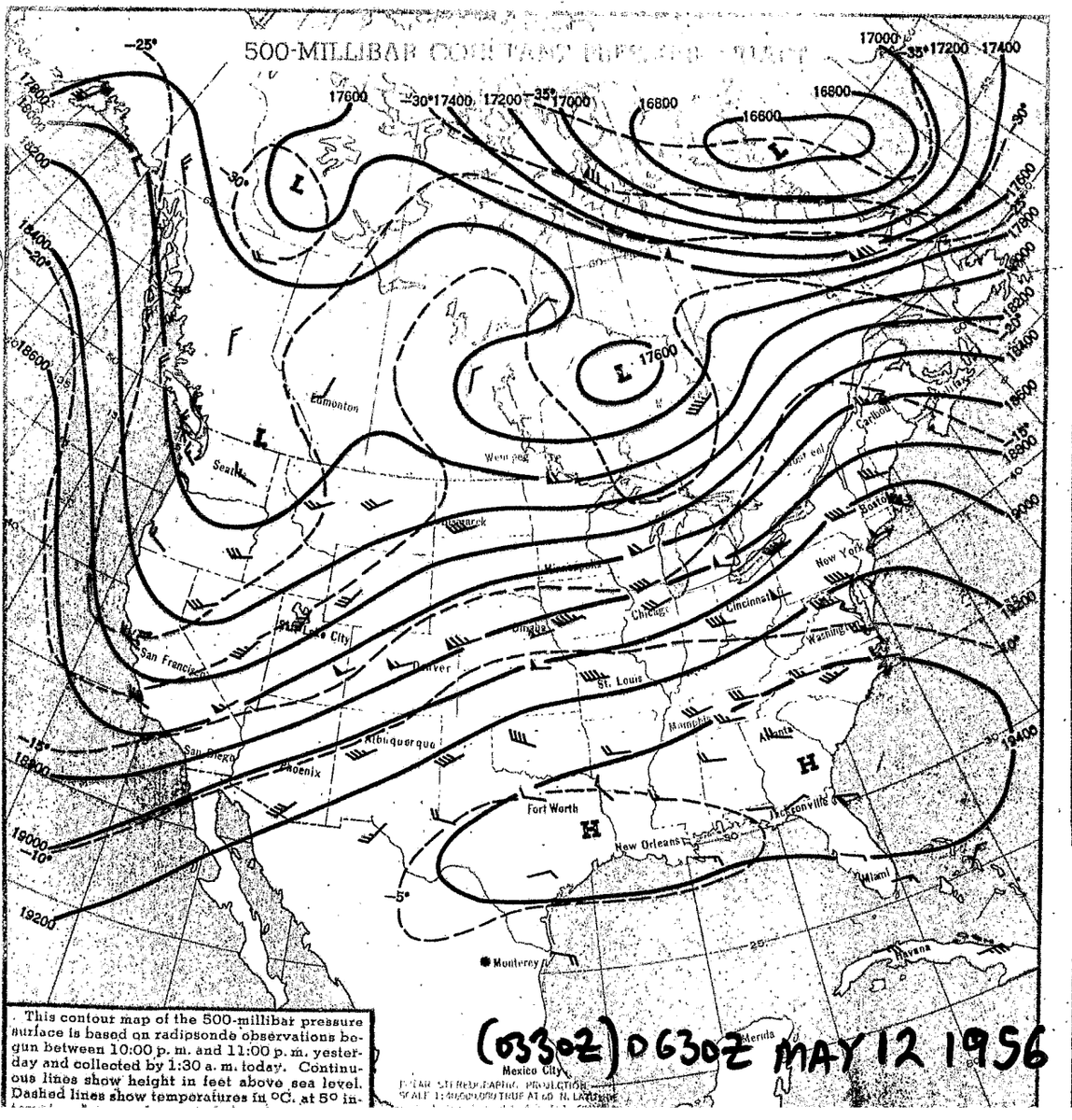


This contour map of the 500-millibar pressure surface is based on radiosonde observations begun between 10:00 p. m. and 11:00 p. m. yesterday and collected by 1:30 a. m. today. Continuous lines show height in feet above sea level. Dashed lines show temperatures in °C. at 5° intervals. Arrows show wind direction; force is in knots.

(0330Z) 0630Z MAY 12 1956



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