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TORNADO PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

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ALTA

1. DATE AND TIME TUES JULY 14, 1981, 1700 MST

2. LOCATION OR PATH (attach map)

Skeleton Lake (150 Km north of Edmonton)

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

4. PATH WIDTH Unknown 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.) Heavy rain

10. TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATE $ Unknown 11. TOTAL DEATHS none

12. TOTAL INJURED none 13. TOTAL HOMELESS none

14. LIST ALL REFERENCES

Toronto Globe & Mail
July 16, 1981
Edmonton Journal, Alta, July 15, 1981

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

(b) Trees hurled onto roof of cabin

T.D. 1157 4125 250 0
57 8250

Alberta

STORM DATE: TUES JULY 14, 1981
AFTERNOON

Canadian Press Clipping Service
481 UNIVERSITY AVE.
TORONTO, M5W 1A7

Toronto Globe & Mail, Ont.
Circ. 286,273
July 16, 1981

CANADIAN PRESS CLIPPING SERVICE

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1492



A motorist comes to the end of the road on a flooded street in Edmonton. UPC

Sudden Alberta storm a killer

EDMONTON (CP) — It remained cool and cloudy with scattered showers over much of west-central Alberta yesterday as civic workers cleaned up after a violent storm that struck on Tuesday afternoon, bringing sudden heavy downpours that killed four city workers in Edmonton.

The rainfall reached 60 millimetres in some areas. Edmonton received 55 millimetres (2.2 inches) in less than three hours, and Red Deer received 46.6 millimetres, most of that in a six-hour period.

The four Edmonton workers drowned in a tunnel when a sewer line ruptured under the strain of the heavy rain. They were building a new tunnel 45 metres below ground when the earth separating them from the sewer line collapsed on them. "They never had a chance," a fellow worker said.

He said other workers are nervous now because "we're working down there too." Phil Walker, utilities and engineering commissioner, said there will be full investigation of the incident.

The storm was accompanied by tornadoes. One touched down north of Edmonton, in the Morinville area, ripping off the roof of a barn and bringing the walls down around farmer Arthur Tolsma.

"I can't describe how it felt," he said. "All of a sudden it just seemed the whole roof was taking off. . . . It went 10 feet in the air and came down real slow."

Mr. Tolsma crawled out of the wreckage unhurt, then went back in to rescue his 50 cows, eventually getting all 50 out unharmed.

Another tornado touched down at Skeleton Lake, 150 kilometres north of Edmonton, hurling trees on to the roof of a cabin. A third was reported near Govan, Sask.

The rain in Edmonton created chaos during afternoon rush-hour traffic. Bus service was halted for several hours because of flooded underpasses. The light rail transit system was shut down when tracks were washed out, but the city hoped the disruption could be limited to one day.

Sporting events were cancelled, some flights were diverted from the municipal airport to Edmonton International Airport, and hundreds of basements and yards were flooded.

Hundreds of city workers were on the job yesterday in Red Deer and Edmonton trying to get backed-up water through the sewer systems to give them a chance to clean up the mess.

ALTA
STORM DATE: TUES
JULY 14, 1981, 1850 MST
P. 1 of 2

Canadian Press Clipping Service
481 UNIVERSITY AVE
TORONTO, M5W 1A7

Edmonton Journal, Alta.
Circ. 164,428
July 15, 1981

CANADIAN PRESS CLIPPING SERVICE
V 1472

Farmer in barn hit by tornado

By LORRAINE LOCHERTY and MARIE CAPPUCCITTI

A Morinville-area farmer escaped unharmed Tuesday when a freak tornado smashed his barn down on top of him.

Arthur Tolsma was working in the barn when a tornado — the third to hit Northern Alberta in two days — ripped off the roof and crushed the walls around him.

"I can't describe how it felt. All of a sudden it just seemed like the whole roof was taking off," said Mr. Tolsma, 32.

The tornado that struck his Riviere Qui Barre farm about 7:50 p.m. was the second Tuesday and the third since Monday.

The first twister destroyed three buildings on a Winterburn farm Monday. At about 6 p.m. Tuesday, the second tornado snapped three 20-metre trees out of the ground and hurled them onto the roof of a cabin at Skeleton Lake, 150 kilometres north of Edmonton.

The third tornado sent twisted tin flying across the Tolsmas' front yard like bits of paper and knocked down a power pole. Power in the little community, just south of Morinville, was out for about an hour.

"The whole roof over me went 10 feet in the air and came down real slow," said Mr. Tolsma.

Damage to the three-year-old barn is at least $75,000, he said.

He crawled out of the wreckage uninjured and started rescuing 50 cows inside.

The cows were unharmed and the tornado didn't touch his garage or his two-storey house, where his wife and five children were watching television.

"The sky was a funny color and there was this strange whistling noise," Mr. Tolsma's wife, Alice, told The Journal over coffee while neighbors helped clear the debris and build a stall for the Tolsmas' nine calves.

More TORNADO Page A2

(Continued from Page A1)

"The whole thing was over in about 20 seconds."

A neighbor, Vera Soelaert, saw the tornado hit.

"My husband heard a roar and we looked out the window," she said. "It took the roof right off, there was tin flying all over."

Mr. Tolsma's father, Fred, said the twister, which came from the east, headed southeast after hitting the barn.

"It just missed my son's house and passed between the house and the garage," he said.

Mr. Hardie, of Skeleton Lake, said his family was just sitting down to dinner when the tornado hit.

"I've never seen anything like it in my life," he said. "Trees were just bent right over at right angles to the ground and in 10 seconds everything was over."

Mr. Hardie said the poplars were ripped from the ground and hurled onto his cabin roof. He didn't realize a twister had hit until he heard three thumps on the ceiling.

A spokesman for the atmospheric environment service said they did not predict the tornadoes.

"Because they're associated with thunderstorms, they're hard to predict," said forecaster Brian Greaves.

About four tornadoes a year strike the province, but Albertans don't have to worry — they never last more than 15 minutes. And Alberta doesn't get families of tornadoes like the ones that hit in the U.S.

"We pretty well rely on people telling us about them. Observing stations are too far apart and if no one is at the scene, we never hear about them," Mr. Greaves said.

A funnel cloud forms when a thunderstorm — caused by an uplift of air — matures. The result is a downward rush of air that gathers momentum from the weight of rain.

ALTA

STORM DATE: TUES JULY 14, 1981, 1850 MST

P. 2 of 2



PICTURE: Jackie Northam

Arhur Tolsma escaped after a freak tornado devastated his barn near Morinville.