798419 B ✓ F1

TORNADO PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

1. DATE AND TIME July 8, 1984 17:00, CDT

2. LOCATION OR PATH (attach map) Rosenort, Man

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.) - rain - golf-ball sized hail

10. TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATE $ 1,000,000 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.

b) ½ roof blown off house, grain bins carried away. 100 buildings damaged

T.D. 14591375
5432875 5000

St. Claude, Rosenort hit by Sunday twisters

Numerous injuries but no deaths reported

by Brian Geary and Gwen Anderson

A volunteer with the Mennonite Disaster Services says it was probably a series of three or four tornado-like winds that caused damage to at least 100 structures late last Sunday afternoon in Rosenort, 20 kilometres northwest of Morris.

But Frank Dueck, who lives on a farm southeast of the village of 300, said in a telephone interview Monday morning the rain was so heavy during the suppertime storm that people near the edge of the blow were better able to see the details. Although Jake Dueck admitted, from his farm one mile east and four miles south of the community, what saw did not seem that threatening.

"I looked out the window and I saw the dark clouds...there was a lot of wind, but I didn't give it much thought," he said from the emergency centre in the Rosenort firehall.

While most houses only suffered damage from lost singles, Jake Dueck said he feels" one, maybe two houses" might be considered writeoffs. "One had its roof blown half off and the rains came in very heavily.

But while he added numerous grain bins were literally sucked into the wind and destroyed, he felt no business suffered enough damage to force it to close. Uprooted and damaged trees is probably the most visible evidence of the storm, he added.

Frank Dueck said the Mennonite Disaster Service, a part of the Mennonite Central Committee, put out a call for volunteers shortly after the storm hit. By one in the morning they had 12 generators set up in chicken and hog barns in the area and continued working through the night, along with Manitoba Hydro employees.

While most volunteers had been local people, Frank Dueck said he hoped for around 200 volunteers from as far away as Steinbach and Blumenort by afternoon to help in the cleanup.

No dollar estimate of the damage is available yet although some unconfirmed reports put the figure at about $1 million.

St. Claude residents are digging out from under the wreckage left by a twister which touched down in that community Sunday evening.

See **Twisters** Pg. 4

Tornados prompt weather tips

Various areas of Manitoba have been hard it by severe storms recently. The following afety tips will assist you in the event of ıture occurrences of severe weather in your rea.

First and foremost, keep informed of the ossibility of severe weather. When heavy hunderstorms appear likely, a severe veather watch is issued up to six hours in adance. This is to alert people to the possibility f severe weather. A weather warning is ssued when severe thunderstorms have een identified or are imminent. Warnings re given on short notice, usually two hours r less, and are quickly communicated to the ublic by radio or television.

When outside, keep a "weather eye" open or the signs of severe weather - frequent ightning, roll clouds and chaotic sky, nusual darkness and possible funnel clouds. 3e prepared to seek shelter.

Lightning - If caught outside, keep away rom high objects such as large trees or ıydro poles. Don't be a lightning rod by carying such objects as umbrellas, fishing poles ır golf clubs. Places shielded by bonded metal, such as automobiles or airplanes, are safe, especially if insulated from the ground by rubber tires. An open tractor attached to a grounded implement is dangerous.

Tornadoes - An approaching tornado may be avoided by moving away from its path at a right angle. If caught outside, lie flat in a ditch or ravine and hang onto a small tree or shrub. If possible, seek shelter in a nearby sturdy building, preferably in the basement, interior room or hallway.

In a home, the safest place is the basement, under a sturdy table or a stairway. If there is no basement, a small room or hall near the centre, or on the side away from the approaching storm would be safest. Avoid wide-span buildings and large open areas such as supermarkets or gymnasiums. In any building, keep away from windows, particularly those facing an approaching tornado.

The Severe Weather Watch program, operated by Environment Canada with the assistance of several thousand volunteer observers, has proven to be an effective method of identifying and reporting hazardous weather. Very localized weather conditions may escape detection by the widely spaced official reporting network and volunteer reports may be the only information available. When severe weather is observed, the volunteer takes a few minutes of his time to report the event to the weather office. On this basis, a weather warning may be issued.

If you are interested in becoming a Severe Weather Watch volunteer, please contact Bob Barrett, Atmospheric Environment Service, 266 Graham Avenue, 10th floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 3V4.

Tornado left heavy damage toll

by Barbara Shewchuk

A tornado rampaged across Southern Manitoba. July 8 leaving in its wake battered crops and damaged buildings, but miraculously no deaths.

From Carberry in the northwest to Vita in the southeast, crops lie trampled by hail and crushed by wind.

In the Sperling and Brunkld districts, "Every single field within the boundaries of the storm has been completely destroyed," said the Morris Agriculture Representative.

Thousands of acres in the Sanford area were battered as the hail moved east, leaving some Rosenort area fields "shaved like a lawn mower" in the words of Art Cornelsen of Rosenort.

From Aubigny to Otterburne damage was estimated by the St Pierre Ag. Rep. at 25 percent overall, with complete destruction of some crops in the Dufrost, Ste. Elizabeth, and St Malo districts. Damage continued as the storm hit the Tolstoi and Vita areas.

A "very weak low pressure system" grew from the hot, humid air mass into a "wave" of destruction, explained an Environment Canada spokesman. The conditions that produced the tornado were the same as those that produce ordinary thunderstorms. He said a "hail shadow" invariably follows just to the left of a tornado track.



Farm levelled by twister

Photo by Gwen Anderson

The July 6 twister levelled the DeRocquigny farm, a few miles outside St. Claude. The DeRocquigny brothers lost two houses, a barn, a machine shed, shops and graneries to the tornado. The twister left a trail of destruction stretching from St. Claude through Sperling to Rosenort.

Crops looking very good

Brunkild, Sperling crops devastated by rains, storm

With the Southern portion of the Pembina Valley escaping the destructive effects of high winds, excess rain and hail that more northerly farmers have been subjected to, there appears every likelihood that this year's crop will be very good.

At Morden, ag. rep. Brian Nedohin is cautiously predicting excellent crops for farmers in his area. While conditions to date have been very favorable and all indications point to a bumper crop, Nedohin says weather could still make a difference.

"Crops here are really good. We've had nothing to complain about–yet," he said, adding: "We've been fortunate here-there hasn't been the high winds, excess moisture or hail that other areas have had."

Because the crops in his district have advanced to the current stage without bad weather, Nedohin says they are better able to survive any bad weather that may hit between now and harvest.

"The crops here can take more than those in the Sperling and Brunkild areas which got hit when they were smaller," Nedohin said.

Nedohin says the rye crop is as good as he has seen in some time and predicts the yield could hit 50 bushels per acre. Other crops are doing as well, he added, noting that most fields are very thick.

Although not a problem yet, corn borer is making its presence felt and spraying began last week. He indicated there is less corn acreage than in past years, explaining that some farmers are getting their corn fields back into rotation after overcoming the residual effects of Atrazine.

"The price of the crop and the cost of production is a big factor. A lot of guys are going back to lower cost of production crops to ensure themselves of a better return," he said.

"The hay crop is better than it's been in the last couple of years," the Morden ag. rep. said, noting that a number of farmers are now cutting and baling ditches which have been producing upwards of 75 bales per acre.

With heavy crops and moist conditions, sclerotina or stem rot is surfacing in canola and spraying is fairly widespread.

There has been some infestation of grasshoppers, Nedohin said, but not as bad as reported in the south-west corner of the province.

"Some pastures have a fair number of hoppers and the next three weeks will likely see more," he added.

Extensive Damage

The crop devastation in the easterly portion of the Pembina Valley is even more tragic because many Carman area farms are enjoying a good summer.

Provincial agronomist in Carman Brian Andrews said in telephone interview "the crops look very good." Andrews said he expects a good yield from areas which escaped the ravages of the weather because crops in much of the area are doing well and most farmers have weeds under control.

But Keith Porter, Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation agent in Carman, said that parts of St. Claude, Elm Creek and Homewood have been wiped out by the recent hail and tornadoes. Jack Sotheran, Homewood Manitoba Pool Elevator spokesman, said that parts of Homewood did not suffer the onslaught of the storms. Much of the rain and hail, he said, fell to the north and east of Homewood.

Lloyd Jessen, crop insurance agent in the Sanford office, said his area is under the worst siege he has ever seen. He said farms lying in the path of the July 8 twister are reporting 100 per cent losses. The line in his area, he said, stretches from Brunkild through Sperling to Rosenort.

But the area was in trouble even before the tornado struck, Jessen said. Brunkild and Sperling area farmers were already bailing out from eight inches of rain and spots of hail from the June 21 storm. "What the rain and hail didn't get was wiped out anyway," he said.

Jessen said he doesn't have an estimate of the lost acres yet because his office has been flooded with claims. He said additional crop adjusters and secretarial staff have been joining the Sanford office last week and again this week in attempt to keep up with the claims.

"This is the worst I've ever seen," he said, "with something like this we're dealing with a person's whole life."

Prospects 'excellent'

The crop prospects are "excellent," according to the ag. rep. in one of the smallest but most intensively farmed agricultural districts in Manitoba.

According to Ahmed Khan of Altona, all crops appear to be developing normally despite a cool June and some recent turbulent weather. But in Khan's district, which covers an area from six miles east of Altona to a point seven miles west of Plum Coulee and from the U.S. border to PTH 23, tornados and hail have largely missed the crops.

"We had a little hail in town," he said in an interview late last week. "But the moisture has been coming at just the right time."

But he added "an enormous number of eggs have been laid (by corn borer moths)." Khan has been busy watching moth traps and examining eggs laid on the leaves of corn plants because when they begin to hatch farmers only have a two-day "window" in which to spray before the larvae reach the stem.

Khan said producers in his area were just ready to spray for the pest when the *Times* spoke to him. While hatching has been delayed due to some cool nights, he added at least one major farm, Kroeker's, had

See **Crops** Pg. 4



Dealership in ruins

Andy Delaquis surveys the ruins of his snowmobile dealership in St. Claude after the July 6 tornado. The twister lifted his entire building, leaving only a few snow machines and rubble.

Photo by Gwen Anderson

Clear tonight 12
Sunny tomorrow 25
DETAILS/2

Winnipeg Free Press

Monday, July 9, 1984 VOL 112 NO 186

SUN Rises 5:30 a.m. Sets 9:38 p.m. MOON Rises 6:50 p.m. Sets 2:33 a.m.

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WAYNE GLOWACKI/WINNIPEG FREE PRESS



Tornado yesterday destroyed autobody shop in St.Claude when 4½-tonne steel support beam was tossed 137 metres.

Tornadoes rip southern area of province

By Doug Speirs

Tornadoes ripped through a number of southern Manitoba communities yesterday, devastating homes, businesses and injuring a number of people.

No one was reported killed and most of those injured were treated for minor cuts and bruises.

Hardest hit by savage funnel winds were the towns of St. Claude, where a ferris wheel was toppled, and Rosenort, where damage has been estimated in the millions of dollars.

One farmer near St. Claude, whose property was razed, estimated damage to be close to $1 million.

Two carnival workers and more than 12 residents were injured in St. Claude, about 80 kilometres west of Winnipeg, when the twister swept through the town's annual French festival, toppling one of two ferris wheels.

Farm buildings razed/8

None of the injured was detained at the local hospital, but at least one carnival worker, apparently pinned under the big wheel when it fell, was taken to hospital in Winnipeg where his condition was not known early this morning.

In Rosenort, about 35 kilometres south of Winnipeg, a spokesman for the Mennonite Disaster Committee said last night about 100 buildings were damaged when the storm hit about 5 p.m.

"I would say you're looking in the millions (of dollars)," Frank Dueck said.

"It tore a lot of buildings down, some farms are just about liquidated . . . it tore power lines down. We're still without power here in Rosenort," Dueck said last night.

The disaster committee has set up headquarters in the town's fire hall where it will co-ordinate a massive cleanup effort slated to begin today with more than 200 volunteers.

An Environment Canada spokesman said tornadoes touched down near Virden about 1:30 p.m., St. Claude about 4 p.m. and Rosenort about 5 p.m.

An RCMP spokesman said twisters also may have touched at Homewood about 4:30 p.m. and St. Malo about 6 p.m. but hadn't been reported to Environment Canada.

The tornadoes, which cut a path from Virden to the southeast corner of the province, were spawned by a severe thunderstorm which covered a section of Manitoba south of Bissett and Dauphin, the spokesman said.

Powerful winds and hailstones, the size of golf balls, also pounded Ste. Rose Du Lac, Carbury, Rathwell, Piney, St. Malo and Lavenham.

See **TORNADOES** page 4

Twister lashes St. Claude

By Dave Roberts
Winnipeg Free Press

ST. CLAUDE — Townspeople were enjoying all the fun of the fair here yesterday when hovering black storm clouds suddenly turned into a swirling twister, ripping through the midway.

Two semi-trailers, chunks of the ferris wheel and several canvas tents were hurled into the air.

"I was thrown about 20 feet (six metres) in the air," one worker, who identified himself only as Grizzly, said.

"It was just like a giant hand picked me up and then dropped me."

No one was on any of the midway rides when the tornado hit, Grey Kennedy, the carnival owner's wife, said.

She estimated damage to the show at more than $200,000.

St. Claude, about 80 kilometres southwest of Winnipeg, was the last stop on a two-week stint for the Winnipeg-based Midwest Shows.

Near the carnival site, a 3.6- by 18-metre house trailer was lifted into the air and dumped on its side.

Inside the trailer, were Lenore Phi-

See **TWISTER** page 4

Tornadoes rip path across Manitoba

continued from page 1

Most of the severe weather passed south of Winnipeg and left the province about 7:30 p.m.

"It was one of the more significant weather events of the year," the spokesman said.

"This one was not so much the rain, but the strong winds and tornadoes. The severity of the weather varied quite a bit."

Manitoba Hydro spokesman Verne Prior said the tornadoes took down at least 20 wooden hydro poles throughout southern Manitoba, leaving a number of communities temporarily without power.

"We suspect there are several isolated cases around the countryside where one line serving two or three farmhouses has been downed," Prior said.

During the Winnipeg Blue Bombers' Canadian Football League game against the Toronto Argonauts, fans from the Niverville and Rosenort area were urged to return home immediately because of the severe weather conditions.

An RCMP spokesman in Virden, near where the first tornado sighting was reported, said last night no damage had been reported in that southwestern Manitoba community.

"We saw no actual sightings of tornadoes. It was just gloomy weather," the spokesman said.

But elsewhere, tornadoes and high winds damaged crops, uprooted trees, smashed windows, ripped shingles from roofs, downed power lines, flipped cars and trailers and demolished some homes, businesses and farm buildings.

RCMP reported that two vehicles on a highway near St. Pierre, about 50 kilometres south of Winnipeg, collided after being lifted off the ground. One driver was slightly injured.

The St. Claude tornado demolished Andy Delaquis' cement-block snowmobile repair shop.

"It (the shop) was only about five or six years old," said Delaquis, who was in his nearby service station at the time, "There's nothing left. The blocks are strewn all over the place, 200 yards away. It's unbelievable."

Estimating the loss at more than $20,000, he said 10 snowmobiles in the building when it was levelled were only slightly damaged.

Aime Gautron, a Winnipegger, was at the St. Claude fair when the funnel wind battered the midway.

"As soon as the wind came up we could see a funnel," Gautron said, "And we could tell something was coming. Everybody just rushed to their cars and all hell broke loose.

"There were trees flying all over the place and shingles from buildings. There was a semi-trailer right by the ferris wheel that was overturned."

In Rosenort, Dueck speculated that more than one tornado was responsible for extensive damage to buildings and crops.

"Garages are pulled off houses, roofs are pulled of," he said last night. "Grain bins really got hit. My neighbor just to the east lost eight of them."

He noted the disaster committee rushed 13 generators to the beleaguered town to supply power to livestock barns where chickens, pigs and other animals quickly would perish without proper ventilation.

WAYNE GLOWACKI/WINNIPEG FREE PRESS



St. Claude farmer Gene De Roquigny and daughter Jennifer view damage after tornado struck.

Twister turns fun at the fair into panic at St. Claude midway

continued from page 1

lippot, 26, and four children: her daughters Jennifer, 10, and Michelle, 7, and two of her neighbors' children, aged two years and 10 months.

"The wind got pretty strong and started popping the windows," Philip pot said.

"I took the kids into the bedroom. They were all screaming and crying.

"It was chaos. I've never been so scared in all my life.

"Everybody had the feeling we were going to die. We're just lucky to be alive, very lucky."

Another carnival worker and more than a dozen area residents were treated for minor injuries after the twister cut through the centre of town just after 4 p.m. There were no fatalities and no one was detained overnight at the tiny, 12-bed St. Claude Hospital, head nurse Gisele Jobin said.

"I don't know how many stitches we sewed in, but it was a lot," she said.

"The tornado hit at 4:05 p.m. and they (victims) started coming in one minute later."

St. Claude, with a population of about 700, was believed to be the hardest hit of a number of communities in the tornado's path.

Townspeople said they had no warning.

"It came from the northeast," Henri Dacquay, 52, said. "I was looking at the clouds and thought to myself: 'There is something queer going on here.'

"I could see this black stuff hitting the sky, all this black going straight up. The doors of the house flew open and two stray cats came running in. They were strays, not ours. They were just scared I guess."

Minutes later, Dacquay drove over to his body shop to survey the damage there. He found nothing left.

A 4.5-tonne, 12-metre steel beam that supported the roof of the cinder-block building had been tossed about 137 metres across a field.

Two cars in the shop for body work were heavily damaged. At the town arena, people had been enjoying the fifth annual Festival francais before the twister descended on that as well.

In other parts of town last night, trees and power lines were ripped down, shingles were missing from most homes and a number of roofs had caved in.

As cleanup operations began, residents estimated property damage at more than $2 million.

WAYNE GLOWACKI/WINNIPEG FREE PRESS



A mass of broken timber and twisted metal is all that is left of the DeRocquignys' farmhouses, dairy barn, silos, sheds and equipment.

WAYNE GLOWACKI/WINNIPEG FREE PRESS



Local residents inspect damage near DeRocquigny farm.

Ninety-second twister razes life-long farming operation

By Dave Roberts
Winnipeg Free Press

ST. CLAUDE — The DeRocquigny farm near here took two generations to build. It took just 1½ minutes to be razed by a tornado that swept through this small community yesterday.

All that was left of two farmhouses, a dairy barn, grain silos, machine sheds and equipment was a mass of broken timber and twisted metal.

Jean DeRocquigny, his wife and three young children just stood crying and bleeding from minor injuries in the broken shell of their farmhouse as the tornado continued its path of destruction.

"We were all just dazed and having a good cry together," Margaret DeRocquigny, 30, said last night.

"Then, to top it all off, it started hailing on us. Big, jagged hailstones the size of golf balls."

Her 35-year-old husband said: "There was nowhere to go. We thought about going to the car, but it was all smashed."

DeRocquigny estimated his property damage at more than $1 million.

He said he and his son Daniel, 5, were getting ready to milk the cows when the twister cut across the fields from the northwest.

"Stuff started to fly around," he said. "I saw one (hydro) wire start to break before I started hiding and then the trees started flying.

"There was just a wind sound. It was just instinct. I decided to take my son and hide behind the bulk tank."

Margaret and the DeRocquignys' two daughters, Jennifer, 9, and Rachel, 7, were in the house as the tornado swirled toward the farm.

"We were upstairs," Jennifer said. "My mom knew something was happening when the shingles came through the window.

"She said, 'Get near the basement,' but my legs didn't want to move, I was so scared.

"It was a whistling; you could hear trees cracking and things banging around.

"Then, all of a sudden, it was as quiet as anything."

Jean, cut by flying debris and limping after the bulk tank fell on his leg, went to the house.

"I could hear Margaret calling to me," he said. "I went over with Daniel. All I could think was: 'Thank God! Everybody's alive.' "

Ironically, the old house had recently been renovated after a car was hurled into it during a tornado a couple of years ago.

After the storm, more than one hundred cars belonging to neighbors and onlookers were parked on the road leading to the farm.

The rain-soaked air smelled of sap from broken maple trees.

Huge shards of metal from grain storage bins were wrapped around peeled tree stumps.

Neighbors loaded 70 cows on to trucks. One calf was killed by the twister.

FIVE MINUTES OF DESTRUCTION

MIDWAY MAYHEM



By HEIDI GRAHAM
Sun Staff Writer

Two young men narrowly escaped death when a tornado touched down at the fair grounds in St. Claude, Man. and knocked over a ferris wheel late yesterday afternoon.

"I thought my buddy was dead," said 20-year-old Dave Ayotte of Winnipeg, who worked at the Festival Francois, a celebration of Bastille Day.

The tornado landed at the northeast end of the town and went in an easterly direction along Hwy 2.

Ayotte was holding one of the game sheds trying to stop it from blowing away when he noticed co-worker Dave Maseroni lying on the ground in front of the ferris wheel.

Maseroni had been hit by a piece of lumber while trying to reach a tractor to get cover from the storm.

"I had to get to him so I let go of the game, but the winds took me down. I saw the ferris wheel rocking and I knew Dave was lying where it was going to land.

"Just as I reached him it went over and hit me on the arm, just missing my head. It landed about a foot from where he was.

"But I was so dazed I didn't think of anything but all the blood around Dave's head. He finally moved so I knew he was alive, but I couldn't carry him out of the storm, so I just held him until it blew over.

"After that some people came over and took us to the hospital."

Maseroni received 17 stiches to one cut in his head, had a injured leg and various cuts on his face.

Ayotte was treated for a badly bruised arm.

Both men were released from the hospital yesterday.

"I just thank God we made it out alive," said Ayotte.

Henry Levesque, who worked the ferris wheel, said things could have been a lot worse.

"We decided to close for the day so there was no one on the ride. I hate to think what would have happened if there had been.

"It all happened so bloody fast, we wouldn't have had time to get them out — it would have been a disaster."

A huge tractor trailer was rolled on its side, most of the game sheds were beyond recognition, and debris lay all around the grounds.

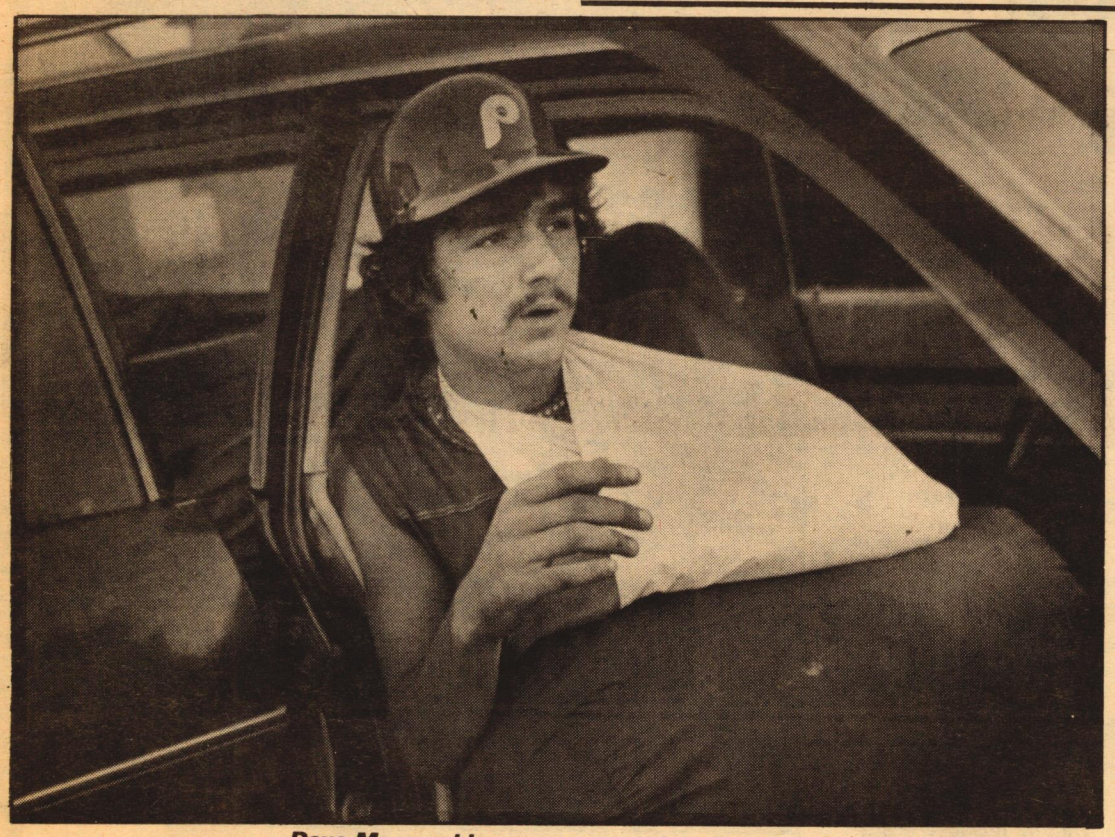
"But no one really panicked," said Levesque. "They all just headed for cover and waited the thing out. It was gone in five minutes.

"We're all really lucky to be alive."

This ferris wheel crashed to the ground yesterday as a vicious twister touched down at St. Claude.

Sun photos by GERARD KWIATKOWSKI

More storm coverage on Page 4.



Dave Maseroni lay comatose under teetering ride . . .



. . . as Dave Ayotte tried to save 'dead' buddy.

FIVE MINUTES OF DESTRUCTION

HOME BLOWN AWAY



The Philippots lost their mobile home to the save storm that blew through St. Claude.

By HEIDI GRAHAM
Sun Staff Writer

Lenore and Roger Philippot lost their mobile home and everything in it during the fierce tornado storm in St. Claude, Manitoba yesterday afternoon.

"I can't be too upset yet, My children might have been badly injured or even killed. So I'm just thankful right now," said 26-year-old Lenore.

She and her four children, 7-year-old Michelle, 2-year-old Mack, 1-year-old Joanne and 10-year-old Jennifer were in the mobile home when the strong winds tossed it on its side.

Roger was over at the Festival Francois when the tornado landed.

"I saw there was a storm coming so I went to turn off the TV like I'd been taught," said Michelle.

"But the trailer started rocking and my mom yelled at me to get out. She went to grab the babies, but none of us got out in time.

"It was the worst feeling. The whole house just went right over on its side. I got stuck in the hallway, because some stuff landed on me.

"I began to cry because I thought they wouldn't be able to find me. I thought I'd be stuck there for a long time and I didn't know if the storm was over or if it was going to last a long time.

"I heard my mom yelling for me, but I was crying so hard I couldn't answer right away. She started crying and yelling and I answered 'I'm over here.'

"She got the stuff off me, but we were still stuck inside, the door was blocked. But everything turned out okay because our neighbor came and smashed in a window and got us out.

"Then he brought us over to his house just in case."

Roger said he hoped the insurance would cover most of the costs.

"But there's a lot of stuff in there like pictures, and things that can't be replaced."

"We don't know what we're going to do yet, but a lot of people have come by to offer us help," said Lenore.

"They've all been just great."

'Half my house was missing'

By HEIDI GRAHAM
Sun Staff Writer

A tornado left a trail of destruction in its path when it touched down for five minutes in St. Claude, Manitoba yesterday afternoon.

"There are so many homes that are demolished," said Pierre Gauthier. "I'm just glad no one was badly injured."

His daughter-in-law, Elaine Gauthier lost the roof, garage and an addition of her home.

"We'd taken cover at the fair grounds, so none of our family was injured," she said. "But as we were going home we saw the many of our neighbors' homes destroyed or badly damaged."

"I couldn't believe it when I turned the corner and saw that half my house was missing."

Odette Chapellaz watched the storm from her home where she was safe with her 4-year-old son.

"There was a high wind and then the rain started coming down really badly," she said.

"Then the sky went pitch black and things started flying. I've never seen anything so bad."

"A car was lifted right into the air, windows were flying, homes, business and crops were wiped out, my neighbor found part of a roof from God-knows-where in her yard, and a lot of trees are completely flat.

"The worst thing was there was absolutely no warning, we had no idea anything like this was going to happen."

One man watched from his home as an 18-inch, 20-foot long steel beam flew down the road.

"It must've travelled at least 300 yards," he said.

The DeLaquiers lost two businesses to the tornado.

"I was drinking coffee in a restaurant during the storm, and when it was over someone came in and said — hey, your autobody shop doesn't exist anymore," said Gerrard DeLaquiers.

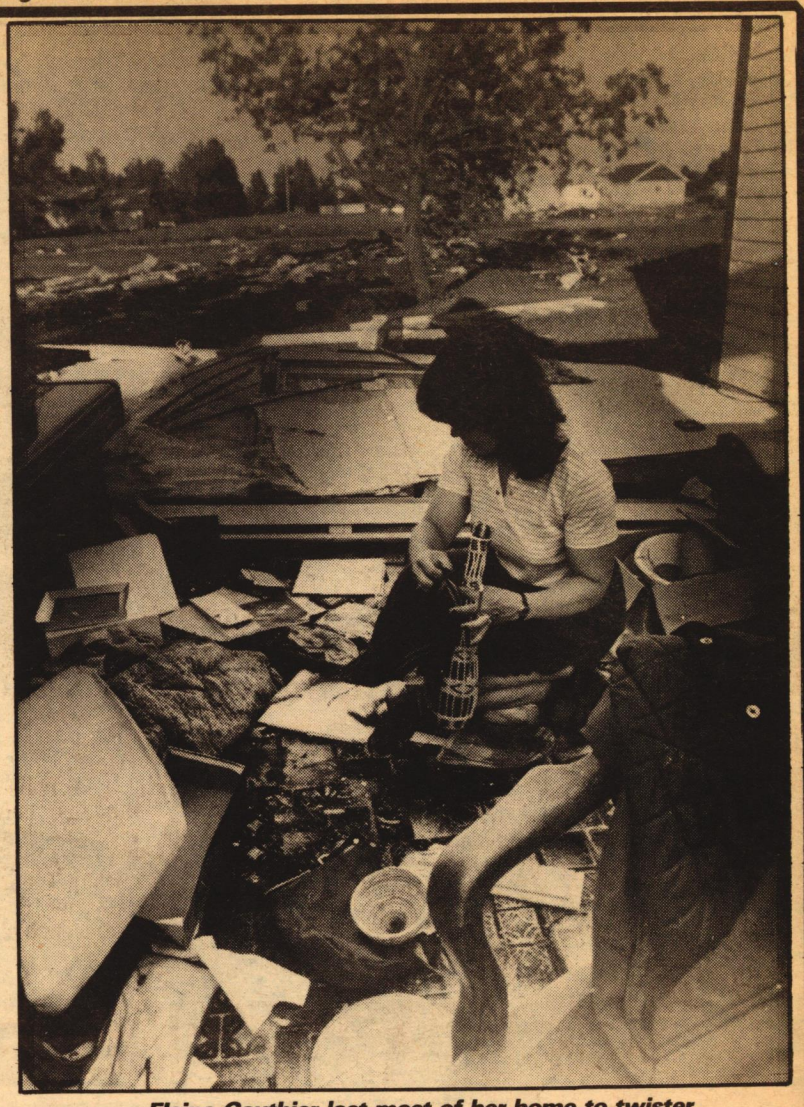
"Then I found out our snowmobile shop was totalled too. It's hard to believe two buildings could be sheered right to the ground in five minutes."

One of the DeLaquiers' skidoos was later found in a neighbor's yard 2½ blocks away.

Henry Levesques made it to a truck when the storm broke, but almost lost his head when a piece of metal piping slammed into the front windshield.

"I've never been so scared in my life," he said.

"I was really lucky that it hit just beside where I was sitting."



Elaine Gauthier lost most of her home to twister.