Possible Tornado
Guelph, Ontario
July 22, 1866

Date- Local: Sunday, July 22nd, 1866
UTC: None available
Time- Local: None available
UTC: None available
Location: Guelph
Region: Waterloo - Wellington
Classification: Possible Tornado
Category: None available
Casualties: None
Track Length: None available
Width: None available
Motion: None available
Damage Estimate: None available
F-Scale Rating: F2
Code: BS, OB
Damage Survey: None
Spotter Reports: None
Other Documents:

Information from a recent newspaper (not known which) but sources: GHS Publications Vol. 6 report from the Galt Reporter of July 27, 1866 and the Guelph Mercury Centennial Edition, July 20, 1927.

Tornado F-Scale Assessment

Brad L. Rousseau
Tornado Data Production Assistant, Environment Canada
February 23rd, 2011

Classification: Possible Tornado
Date: Sunday, July 22nd, 1866
Location: Guelph, Waterloo – Wellington Region

Assessment: F2
F-Code: BS, OB
Explanation of Assessment: Multiple barns destroyed, Coal-oil refinery completely destroyed and Mr. Holliday's brewery had the roof blown off. A tent of a miniature menagerie, a satellite of Don Costello's circus and pitched tent in Guelph's Markey Square, was torn from its moorings.

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The Canadian Press

Violent storms make the history books

By Rosemary Anderson

Guelph is no stranger to natural disasters – some have resulted in funny situations and others almost tragic, according to newspapers of the time.

On Sunday, July 22, 1866, a violent windstorm passed through this area. The tornado struck Guelph and completely destroyed Mr. McCrae's coal-oil refinery. The Grand Trunk freight station was hit by lightning, Sherriff Grange's barns were destroyed and the roof of Mr. Holliday's brewery was blown off.

Further excitement was caused when a tent of a miniature menagerie, a satellite of Don Costello's circus and pitched in Guelph's Market Square, was torn from its moorings.

A black bear, a span of wolves, half a dozen monkeys and a number of guinea pigs and other "small deer" were freed. They seemed to be more amazed at their liberation than the humans were.

The women members of the show were in a precarious position because they became entangled in the shreds of the circus tent.

The bear "bobbed around" the fire station for a quarter of an hour to the amusement and terror of a group of boys who had gathered on the scene. Finally it was lassoed and returned to his cage. The wolves and monkeys were captured more easily than the bear.

On Monday, July 21, 1919, 30 minutes of a "violent tempest, deluge of water, furious wind and ear-splitting thunderclaps" flooded Guelph's downtown. A motor car on Upper Wyndham Street was carried for over 40 yards and hurled into a motor truck. An electric wire had been cut in two and a five-year-old boy touched the wire. A man used a broomstick to get him off the wire. The boy recovered in the General Hospital.

Source: GHS Publications Vol. 6 report from the Galt Reporter of July 27, 1866 and the Guelph Mercury Centennial Edition, July 20, 1927.

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