

From: Edward J Hopkins
Date: February 8, 2011 2:47:58 PM CST
Subject: Re: May 11, 1914 "cyclone" in Oregon, WI

Melanie:

Thanks. Interestingly, I found an article that I am attaching from the New York Times archive that provides some additional information from around southern Wisconsin.

Looking at the Madison US Weather Bureau Office's Daily Local Record for 11 May 1914 (that we have in the SCO):

"A severe squall, accompanied by hail occurred at 9:32 a.m. Much damage was done to tobacco sheds, and farm buildings, and four persons were killed. The damage done is estimated at about \$500,000. Newspaper clippings concerning this storm are filed in back of the book." (Note: I will have to make copies of these and could send these to you if you'd like.)

Interestingly, temperatures at North Hall throughout much of the day were in the lower 40s and winds were generally from the NE to E at speeds ranging from 14 to 20 mph, with higher gusts.

While some of the articles, including the one that you sent, use the word "cyclone" or even "hurricane", I did find reference in the Janesville newspaper clipping of the word tornado. Specifically, "A dispatch from Madison reports that the end of a tornado is reported to have hit Dane county today with a velocity of forty-two miles an hour. It wrecked frame buildings and also destroyed farm crops. The laundry at the county farm at Verona was blown down, killing Mrs. Olson of Evansville and injuring others."

Looking at the articles, I see differences in the "facts" -- such as some indicate that Miss Caroline Olsen, aged 19, employee of the Dane county poor farm, (was) struck dead by a bolt of lightning which hit the laundry building. (Also I would think she may have been from near Klevenville, which is closer to Verona than Evansville.)

Apparently, damage was done in the towns of Verona, Fitchburg (near the old Lapple Bros. lumber yard - which I believe would have been by the old Illinois Central train depot in Fitchburg) and Oregon, along with the Stoughton area. When time permits,, I will try to make more sense out of this.

But, the main point that puzzles me is that previous people ignored this one, such as M.W. Burley and P.J. Waite who wrote " Wisconsin tornadoes." in 1964 for the Wisc. Acad. Sci. Arts Lett., 54, 1-35. Either they overlooked it -- somewhat questionable, or they may have concluded that the storm may have been damaging straight-line thunderstorm wind gusts.

More later.

Ed

On 02/07/11, Melanie and Doug Woodworth wrote:
Hi Ed,

I found an article in the 14 May 1914 OREGON OBSERVER. Here is what was written for the damaging storm. I previously sent you some photographs.

Melanie

NYTimes-12May1914.pdf ↵