

1928

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Recommended Citation

Rowe, Paul S. (1928) "Tornado as it Passed Glenwood," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*, 35(1), 239-240.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol35/iss1/44>

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TORNADO AS IT PASSED GLENWOOD

PAUL S. ROWE

All afternoon (June 2, 1925) there had been a hard southeast wind. During the day we had several small showers. From three o'clock till we quit at five, my brother Porter's team begged by action to come home. Just after he unhitched the team he saw falling leaves and twigs. So he looked for a twister. A moment later he yelled "There's a cyclone!" "There's two of them!" "Ah hoooraa" (his call).

Off to the southwest a crooked gray pillar hung from a little cloud down below the horizon. Close to the east of it a gray funnel hung down a short distance. The west one marched slowly up the river (as it looked) finally breaking up about straight west of our place. (I was told that another formed to replace this one after I had gone.)

The east one reached down and grabbed first one then two or three objects that looked like roofs from beyond my line of vision, then broke and drew back into its cloud. But below the cloud hung a whirling mass of dust.

A bit to the northeast another cloud gathered and boiled terribly; it got black, then shot down another gray pillar like a slender inverted twisted cone. That neared the ground and the roof and sides of a barn went whirling, tumbling and flopping up to meet it. It hit the ground beside Henry Bannister's barns. The grove stepped down out of sight. About the foot of the pillar but at a distance from it about twice and one-half its diameter danced a cloud of black mud blowing about like dust. One by one all the buildings hopped into this mud cloud, bursting apart as they came, and with a writhing fling, went rocking and flapping about the gray pillar. Some pieces went only part way around before getting smashed. Others went as much as twice around before settling into the black dust.

At the old brick house the pillar seemed to pause as though reluctant to leave this harder task till it was finished. Kicking large trees out of the way the genu crossed a pasture, then a plowed field veiled in a huge black cloud. It approached a vacant tenant house on Martin Utsmark's place and the house jumped across

the road to meet it, falling into sections as it came. The second time the largest piece came in view it blew up in a yellow cloud.

For a time the gray pillar with its black foot traveled on north-east across the fields, then dwindled to a string blowing about in the wind, only to start anew near Silver City. About the time the pillar shrank, a very hard gust of wind from the southeast struck here like the wave from a passing boat. Before and during the time the storm was visible scattered hail fell with some few stones as large as hen eggs.

Lightning was not conspicuous by either its presence or absence. But that night and the next the radio showed unprecedented static. As soon as the pillar began to get dim in the distance my brothers, Porter and Stanley, and I jumped in a car and went to Bannister's to see if any one could be helped. When the car could go no farther we climbed through the tops of four large trees into the path of worst destruction. The ground had been skinned and plastered with debris. A heap of bright yellow corn and a muddy caved-in tractor marked the site of the double corn crib. The folks most injured had been taken to a doctor so now the horses deserved attention. A mass of splintered boards covered horses, machinery and some hay. Prying off some of these splinters and cleaning away a few of the naily boards on the ground, the fellows led the horses to a neighbor's, where a fence still stood, unharnessed them and turned them out. Not one limped!

The youngest Bannister boy had been near the barn when the storm hit. He helped care for the horses. And a muddier boy you never saw! Face, ears, hands and clothing were plastered evenly with mud that stuck. One ear of corn had left a dent between his eyes and a finger was broken but all that he complained of was cold.

Several hogs and two calves were dead. One calf was crippled and one hog was burst open. Wires had been wrapped about stumps or posts. The windmill was wrapped clockwise about the pump house. But all the trees lay to the north, if near their stumps. The storm whisked southeast to northwest (counter clockwise).

Of the house the partly dugout kitchen remains and a frail flight of outside steps leading to where the parlor was. Nothing else stands but separate brick and one floor. A peony south of the house still kept its petals but the cement foundation of the garage north-west of the house was broken up when the garage went.

GLENWOOD, IOWA.