

Morning View Kentucky
6 March 1956

Hello Mr. McCarthy,

Knowing your interest in weather, I will try to put into words the few seconds of shattering tumult when a small tornado passed through my tree patch about 06:15 Saturday, 25 February.

I had heard the tornado warnings on the six oclock news; but, like most people, did not believe one could form or could maintain destructive progress through these steep ridges and valleys.

We were half right, in that this was not the great, tightly-wound twister tracing a path of almost total destruction. Ours was softer, less forceful, leaving spotty damage along its short, erratic course. It seems to have bounced like a ball. The circular motion, however, was quite evident both at the time of its passing, and in the peculiarities of debris patterns.

Because it slammed directly into my trees, I am gratified that it was not one of the monster ones. Before continuing, lest you think me panicked by unusual gusts of wind or a vigorous storm, I might better qualify myself as an observer.

I am familiar with the fury of Northeasters. I have been bowled off my feet and wedged in a lump at the base of a brick wall by gusts estimated officially at 90 mph. They had to estimate -- the anemometer had blown away. I watched while thousands of dollars worth of airplanes were shredded and rolled into balls and piled into heaps by a line-squall on a Texas airport. I have strangled with my head in a wet pillow slip in a Kansas dust storm. I was on the Florida East coast during a one-bottle-blow. This sounds like bragging but it isn't meant to be. Just explaining.

To set the stage for our Saturday twister. There was a thunder-storm to the Northwest, about 15 miles away and following the regular path into the Cincinnati area. Another had passed to the South and was vanishing to the Southeast. The rain was heavy, and the wind somewhere around 35 mph with gusts that must have been close to 60. The wind was almost directly from the South.

I was standing at the back door, with the outside flood-lights on, watching the hurtling rain sheets and enjoying the roar of the wind in the big oaks.

For no apparent reason, the wind faltered, becoming quite variable and mild, flickering the rain curtains about uncertainly.