April, 1906.

A destructive local storm near Paris, Ill.


About 10 p.m., Wednesday, May 30, there occurred in this locality a notable storm, which, while evincing much of the destructiveness within a small area and many of the freaks of a tornado, yet seems to have lacked the twisting motion.

The morning of the 30th was ushered in by a gentle shower. At 7 a.m. the temperature was 52° F., the barometer reading 29.95 and the wind direction southeast. During the day the temperature increased to a maximum of 84° F. and the wind became almost a gale, while the barometer remained stationary. Light showers occurred at intervals.

At 6 p.m. a violent thunderstorm came up from the northwest, with some wind and much lightning. The clouds were quite threatening, flying in different directions, tumbling and intertwining in a way suggestive of the tornado. No damage was done by this storm, however, and by 8 o’clock the sky was again serene, except for a cloud bank from the northwest, from which came constant flashes of lightning.

At 10 p.m. another electric storm broke, accompanied by vivid lightning and some wind and hail, but doing no great amount of damage here in the city. Six miles southwest of here this storm developed a destructive intensity. A modern, strongly built schoolhouse was completely demolished and its foundation swept clean. Immediately southwest of this schoolhouse was a grove of some twenty acres; most of the trees in this grove were blown down, many of them being second-growth hackberries, eight or ten inches in diameter. Half a mile east of the schoolhouse a large residence was badly wrecked, a smokehouse some twelve feet square having been hurled bodily against it, crushing in one entire side. This house was also struck twice by lightning during the storm, yet none of its inmates were injured.

A dozen other houses in the path of the storm were more or less damaged, some being only unroofed, while others were moved off their foundations or destroyed.

The storm came from the northwest, and a careful survey of the area of destruction, which comprises a path one-half mile wide and some two miles long, shows no evidence of any whirling or twisting force. An old abandoned school building, 60 feet west of the wrecked schoolhouse, was very slightly injured. A coal shed just north of the schoolhouse was moved some ten feet, but not damaged. This coal shed is interesting as showing the terrific force of the hail which accompanied the storm. Every square inch of the surface of its west wall, composed of hard pine, has been battered and indented, frequently to the depth of a quarter of an inch; the shingle roof also shows these imprints.

This storm seems unusual for its concentrated destructiveness without any whirling action, and for the fact that it came from the northwest and that the barometric pressure during its passage was not low. As no weather map was issued for Decoration Day, I do not know the general conditions. The chart for the following day 1 shows a low central at Duluth, Minn., with a pressure of 29.75 inches and a trough-like depression extending into Texas.

1 The weather map for the day following, showing conditions at 7 a.m., central standard time, only about nine hours after the storm occurred, probably presents more nearly the conditions at the hour when the storm came, than the map of the day itself would do.

By Herbert H. Kimball. Librarian, Weather Bureau.

The establishment of this observatory marks another step forward in the persistent efforts of the government of India to find the relation that is supposed to exist between solar processes and meteorological conditions on the earth.

As early as 1881, Mr. Blanford, then Meteorological Reporter to the government of India, recommended "the improvement of the work of solar observations in order to obtain accurate measures of the sun’s heating power at the earth’s surface and its periodic variations."