
**Confirmed Tornado
Reeces Corners, Ontario
May 2, 1983**

Date- Local: Monday, May 2nd, 1983.

UTC: Monday, May 2nd, 1983.

Time-Local: 13:00

UTC: 17:00

Location: Reeces Corners

Region: Sarnia - Lambton

Classification: Confirmed Tornado

Category: A

Casualties: None

Track Length: ~30km

Width: 200-400m

Motion: 240°

Damage Estimate: \$20 000 000

F-Scale Rating: F4

Code: AH

Damage Survey: one

Spotter Reports: None

Other Documents:

Logged event citing a tornado.

Preliminary report of May 2nd, 1983 storms in Southwestern Ontario, including map and description of damage.

Reeces Corners tornado survey by the Sarnia Weather Office.

Numerous newspaper articles detailing the event.

More information on this event can be found in the vanilla 'Ontario May 1983' folder at the front of this year, including information on what and where the damage occurred along the track.

Tornado F-Scale Assessment

Marci Vanhoucke

Tornado Data Production Assistant, Environment Canada

July 29, 2005.

Classification: Confirmed Tornado

Date: Monday, May 2nd, 1983.

Location: Reeces Corners, Sarnia – Lambton

Assessment: F4

F-Code: AH

Explanation of Assessment: There is a photo that shows a house destroyed to its foundation. It is stated in the report that 15-25 buildings were damaged, some totally and 20 or more farm buildings suffered extensive damage, some completely flattened and removed from foundations. Many homes and buildings were roofless, with some only having foundations left and others tipped over on their sides. Due to the damage stated, this tornado is rated an F4.

CLASSIFICATION: Severe Thunderstorm

SOURCE/WATCHER ID:

EVENT TIME (UTC): 17-00 EVENT DAY: 2.0 MONTH: 5.0 YEAR: 1983.0 EVENT DURATION (HR): 0.0 (MIN): 0.0

DAY OF THE WEEK:

EVENT LOCALE: Reeces Corners

ASOCTD PUBLIC RGN: Sarnia-Lambton



DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

INITIAL ASSESSMENT: YES

SPL WX STATEMENT IN EFFECT ? : UKN STATEMENT LEAD TIME (HR): (MIN):

WATCH IN EFFECT ? : UKN WATCH LEAD TIME (HR): (MIN):

WARNING IN EFFECT ? : UKN WARNING LEAD TIME (HR): (MIN):

TORNADO:

WINDSPEED:

RAINFALL: MM RAIN DURATION:

HAIL DIAMETER: MM HAIL DESCRIPTION:

EVENT DESCRIPTION: Tornado

Mesoscale ? : Synoptic ? : Big Event ? :

Statement Est Hit/Miss:

Watch Est Hit/Miss:

Warning Est Hit/Miss:

Separate Event (30km/30min): YES

Vetted by:

Vetted date:

RECEIVED MAY 17 1983

May 2nd 1983 Tornado - Lambton County

by

G.E. Garner and J.E. Demahower
Sarnia Weather Office

On May 2nd 1983, at approximately 1:00 pm, a tornado crossed Lambton County, causing a path of destruction approximately 30-35 KM long and 200-400 metres wide. Major damage occurred over a small village, Reeces Corners, approximately 25 KM east of Sarnia.

Synoptic situation: OWC preliminary report attached.

A cold front, orientated in a NE-SW line crossed Michigan into South-western Ontario during the noon hour of May 2nd. Severe thunderstorms developed along the front during late morning. Hail was observed in Michigan near Detroit. Detroit radar showed a thunderstorm cell with tops over 37,000 feet, hail was indicated over Ann Arbor, Mich., at 1535Z, moving from 240 degrees at 45 knots. OWC issued a Severe Weather Watch #13 at 1530Z and a Severe Weather Warning # 14 at 1614Z. These were phoned to local Sarnia authorities and were broad-cast on local radio at least 8-10 times before the actual touchdown. On a live update from the Sarnia Weather Office to CHOK-Radio at 1635Z, the Warning, hail and funnel clouds in Michigan and also that this activity would move into Lambton County within the hour, were discussed. The Sarnia W.O. received 2 phone calls regarding sighting of a tornado. The first was an occurrence 5 KM west of Wyoming, the second at Reeces Corners. Both reports were phoned on to the OWC, at which time the Severe Weather Forecaster advised a Tornado Warning was in preparation. The Duty Severe Weather Forecaster and OWC must be commended for a job well done in the timely Watch and Warnings issued that day. Further

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Tornado Warnings not received this office due to power and phone outages.

Weather observed at Sarnia Airport:

021605Z	1ORW-	2025G34	CB ASOCTD SW
021625Z	1OTRW-	1928G40	TSTM S
021645Z	1TRW+A	2127G54	2 CM HAIL PEAK WIND AT 1631Z
021648Z	3TRWF	2019G47	TSTM E

Power off at 1658Z to 2300Z, phone intermittent 1730Z to 1900Z.

Damage:

This tornado was observed to hop and skip across the area concerned. Initial touchdown was near LaSalle Rd. approximately 11 KM SSE of Sarnia airport. It skipped in a Northeasterly direction, touching down at several locations. The twister was observed by Hydro crew to go back into the cloud approximately 30 KM ENE of Sarnia Airport, or "half way between Forest and Arkona." Major damage occurred at Reeces Corners, mainly due to the built-up area as compared to farmlands SW and NE of this location. However, an eyewitness saw one funnel separate into two funnels for a short period of time, then merge back into one. This phenomenon occurred as it was passing over Reeces Corners and could also account for the extensive damage. Another eyewitness saw the tornado approaching his farm; he took shelter in his basement. After less than 3 minutes, he looked up from inside his basement, only to see the sky above him, his house gone, and the tornado skipping along the ground towards the north-east. At Reeces Corners due to the high number of sightseers, police were restricting onlookers from the major damaged areas, including myself and Mr. Dennahower -- having no proper identification as to who we were and what purpose we had there. Fortunately, an expired Emergency Pass card issued to me by the City of Sarnia satisfied the Officer, however, this incident does point out the need for proper identification for all Environment

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Canada personnel involved in any emergency disasters or events.

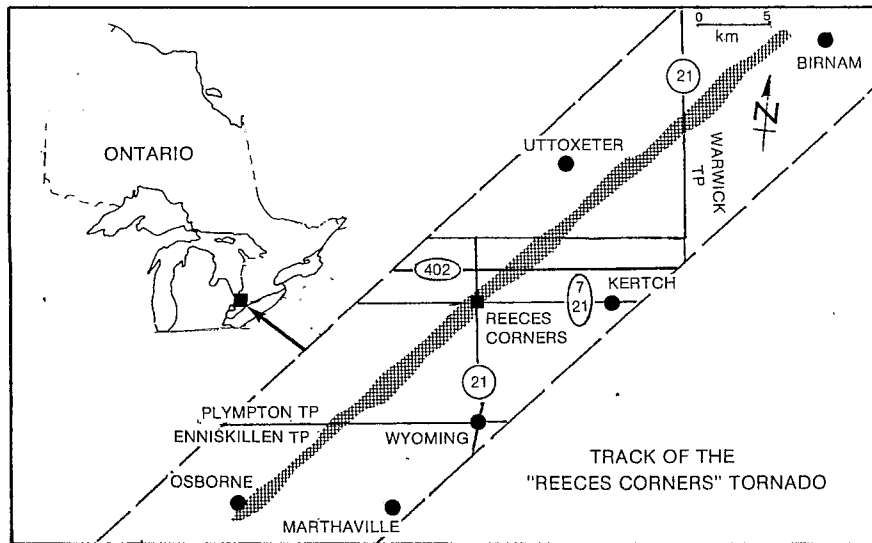
15-25 buildings were damaged in Reeces Corners, some totally. Approximately 20 more farms and associated buildings suffered extensive damage, ranging from complete flattening and removal of buildings from their foundations, to broken windows and sheared off trees - some as much as 3/4 metre in diameter. A phone booth at Reeces Corners was tossed 500 metres, steel and wood light standards and hydro poles were twisted and sheared off - power lines strewn all over. A transport truck was overturned. Many homes and buildings were roofless, some had only foundations left and yet others were tipped over on their sides. Demolished farm buildings were strewn over several acres and appeared to be up to a kilometre from their source points. Twisted roof tin, insulation and debris were scattered over several fields and woodlots, pieces of tin were wrapped around treetops. Total damage was estimated at 20 million dollars. No one was fatally injured, but 3 or 4 were serious and about a dozen with minor injuries.

Conclusion:

This tornado was probably the worst to hit Lambton county since May 21, 1953, 30 years ago, and possibly the worst in Southwestern Ontario since Woodstock, 1979.

The Ontario Weather Centre must be commended for their early assessment of the weather situation and their timely Severe Weather Watches and Warnings, especially along the international border.

In regards to tracking severe thunderstorm cells, a concern of Weather Office staff and indeed the general public and media of Lambton County, is the near blindness of the Sarnia Weather Office on approaching severe storms, due mainly to the lack of radar receiving facilities. Currently, Detroit teletype Rareps are at least 15 minutes old on receipt at this office, with a waiting period of another



30098 KNBC 021600 COR

DTW 1535 COR AREA STRNXXR/+ 21/220 223/125 50W C2445 MT 470 RT 268/211

NMRS TOPS ABV 370 HAIL 272/25

*IN2 JL53 KM4 LL34 NL56 NL6 OK55 PK32 OL2 RK5=

WUCM1 CYYZ 021530

SEVERE WEATHER WATCH NUMBER 13

ENVIRONMENT CANADA TORONTO ONT

11.30 EDT MAY 2 1983

THE ONTARIO WEATHER CENTRE SAYS THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF
SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS WITH LARGE HAIL AND DAMAGING WINDS FOR
THE LAKE ST CLAIR LAKE ERIE AND LAKE HURON REGIONS.

AND THE ADJACENT WATERS OF LAKE HURON LAKE ST CLAIR AND LAKE ERIE

FROM NOON EDT UNTIL 5.00 PM EDT THIS AFTERNOON

THIS IS NOT A WARNING OF IMMEDIATE DANGER.

THIS IS AN ALERT OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SEVERE LOCAL STORMS.

WATCH FOR THREATENING WEATHER.

LISTEN FOR FUTURE STATEMENTS.

THIS WATCH

WILL BE UPDATED OR CANCELLED BY 5.00 PM EDT

THIS WATCH MAY HAVE TO BE EXTENDED TO THE REMAINDER OF SOUTHERN
ONTARIO THIS AFTERNOON.

OTHER WATCHES/WARNINGS IN EFFECT... NONE

END/ MJL

WUCM1 CYYZ 021614

SEVERE WEATHER WARNING NUMBER 14

ENVIRONMENT CANADA TORONTO ONT

12.10 PM EDT MAY 2 1983

IMMEDIATE BROADCAST REQUESTED

THE ONTARIO WEATHER CENTRE HAS ISSUED A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM
WARNING FOR THE COUNTIES OR REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES OF
ESSEX LANITON KENT HURON AND NORTHERN MIDDLESSEX.
AND THE ADJACENT WATERS OF SOUTHERN LAKE HURON LAKE ST CLAIR
AND WESTERN LAKE ERIE.

IN EFFECT UNTIL 2.00 PM EDT

BE PREPARED TO TAKE IMMEDIATE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS.

RADAR INDICATES A LINE A INTENSE THUNDERSTORMS MOVING
EASTWARDS FROM LOWER MICHIGAN. THESE STORMS CAN PRODUCE
WIND GUSTS TO 100 KMH AND 4 CM HAIL. FUNNEL CLOUDS HAVE BEEN
REPORTED WEST OF DETROIT.

REMEMBER... SOME SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS PRODUCE TORNADOES.

OTHER WATCHES/WARNINGS IN EFFECT... 13

AACN2 CYYZ 031952
TO AFDS - ATTN AFWC
CC. OACD

PRELIMINARY REPORT- SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS AND TORNADOES
OF MAY 2ND 1983 IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO.

A COLD TYPE WEATHER FRONT ORIENTED NORTHEAST TO SOUTHWEST MOVED
EASTWARD ACROSS SOUTHERN ONTARIO DURING THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF MAY
2ND 1983. UNDERLYING A VERY VIGOROUS SPRING JET STREAM, THIS COLD FRONT
SPANNED VERY ACTIVE THUNDERSTORMS AHEAD OF AND ALONG THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF
THE FRONT. MOST ACTIVE STORM INTENSITY OCCURRED AHEAD OF THE MORE SOUTHERLY
SEGMENT OF THE FRONT AND MOVED RAPIDLY EAST-NORTHEAST AT 80 KM/H FROM
PLYMPTON TOWNSHIP EAST OF SARNIA TO A POSITION NORTHEAST OF METRO TORONTO
BETWEEN 1300 HOURS AND 1600 HOURS E.D.T.

EARLY REPORTS INDICATE EVIDENT TORNADO ACTION AT REECES CORNERS EAST OF
SARNIA, MANY SIGHTINGS OF BRIEF AND ERRATIC FUNNEL CLOUDS, BRIEF STRONG WINDS
UP TO 125 KM/H IN THUNDERSTORM GUSTS FRONTS AND WIDESPREAD HAIL, PEA TO
MOTHBALL SIZE. DAMAGE TO PROPERTY HAS BEEN NOTED IN MANY LOCALITIES ALONG
MOST OF THE STORM TRACK AND INJURY TO PEOPLE IN PLYMPTON TOWNSHIP. AN
INVESTIGATION TEAM HAS BEEN SENT TO REECES CORNERS.

ACCURATE DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT OF STORM POTENTIAL BY THE ONTARIO WEATHER
CENTRE'S SEVERE STORMS TEAM AND AID FROM 28 ON SITE REPORTS PHONED TO O.W.C.
BY VOLUNTEER WEATHER WATCHERS ALLOWED EXCELLENT PRE-WARNING OF MOST IF NOT
ALL KNOWN EVENTS. A WEATHER WATCH WAS FIRST ISSUED AT 11.30 AM AND WAS
FOLLOWED BY A TOTAL OF 12 OTHER WEATHER WATCHES AND WARNINGS BETWEEN 1210
AND 1915 HOURS.

LONDON