

# Slides and comments on the tornado that struck the home and farm of David and Rosa Toews & sons late on the night of 7 May 1961

Plus a couple other tornados too!

1. Late summer, 2009 on our home-place
2. Uncle Jake Regier photos of 5 June 1966  
tornado very near his home-place

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↑  
toews

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8 August 2015

updated 3 February 2024

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Comments, corrections, recollections, & background materials appreciated

Rodgers and Hammerstein's

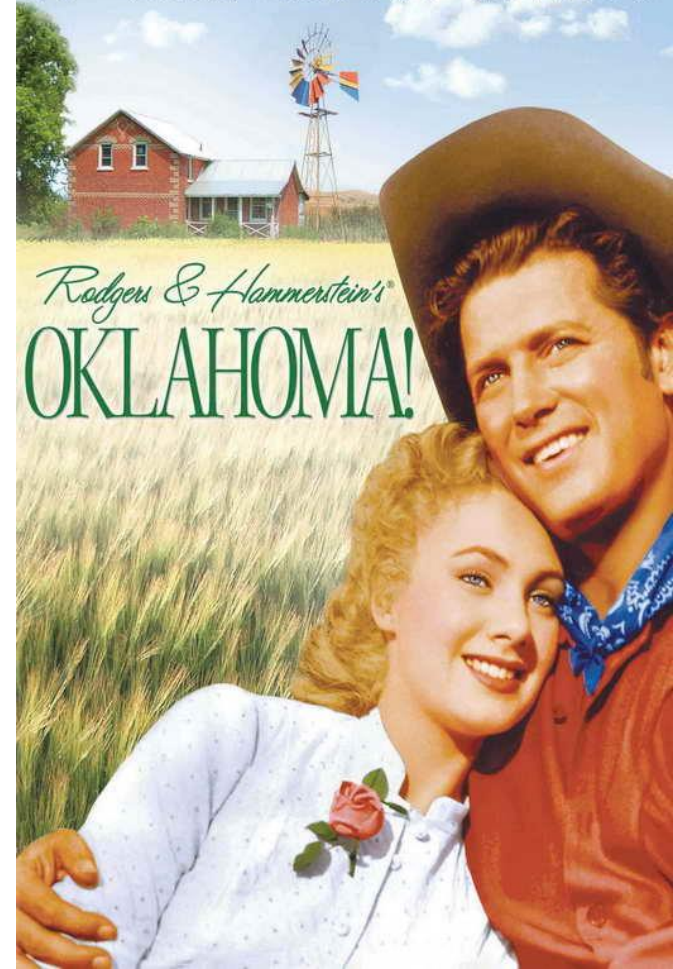
# Oklahoma!



"O-O-O-O-O-Oklahoma,  
where the wind comes  
sweeping down the plains!"

And sometimes that wind  
goes round and round!

50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION





**DAT 10-33: Our home before the 7 May 1961 tornado - on the Half-Section Road, 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  miles W of Kremlin, OK. Note the summer kitchen/wash house, mouse house, & machine shed @ R, and pull-type M&M combine and tall elm tree @ far L. The Toews Brothers regularly played underneath both. The brooder house is visible between the back of the house and the combine. Note newly-installed TV antenna on top of the house roof and bench from Kremlin depot on porch.**



**DAT 10-35: Our Mother, Rosa M Toews, with our new 1960 Chevrolet Bel Air in front of our home. Note the Kremlin CRIP depot waiting bench on the porch, kittens in the porch vents, fuse box by kitchen door & rose bush between the E steps. Chicken house is in the back at R. Toews Brothers bedroom is front-center upstairs, above open car door.**



**Jake Regier slides: Our house & yard after the tornado, looking ENE from Half-Section Road on the hill by George Janzen's home. Note our truck loaded with hay bales, our pale blue pickup, & a piece of barn board still stuck in elm tree by our garden patch. The pile of yellow straw bales between the house and red pickup is all that remains of our large white barn. Far L: brooder house & manure spreader. Kremlin grain elevators in background.**



Jake Regier slides: "Tornado damage @ Uncle Dave & Aunt Rosa Toews Farm, April 1962" (sic). Note intact summer kitchen/wash house, mouse house, machine shed, w/ brooder house behind house at L. Chickens too! Piece of house roof w/gutters in L foreground & screen door and porch bench in front.



Another view of our heavily damaged home after the 7 May 1961 tornado, taken from inside our garden patch, looking NW [source unknown]. Note storm debris in the woven-wire fence.

Our summer kitchen/wash house and "mouse house" at R largely escaped any damage - only the chimney for our mea grope was toppled from the summer kitchen roof. Also note several white boards at L driven into our lawn by the storm.



**Jake Regier slide: Our house & summer kitchen/wash house after the tornado. Note roof fragment (probably from house) & part of steel grain bin in foreground & "old fort/spaceship" 2-holer behind/between house & wash house @ rear. Swing set is intact, as are cisterns.**





**TORNADO0001:** View of our house and summer kitchen a few days after the tornado. Toews Brother's bedroom top L & hallway top R; "junk room" behind hallway upstairs. Dining room bottom L & kitchen & bathroom bottom R. Slide source unknown.



**DAT 11-20: Our house after the tornado, looking NNE from our lawn. Note carpet drying on lawn. Mom & Dad's bedroom is top L & Toews Brother's bedroom top R. "Junk Room" behind Mom & Dad's bedroom. Living room is lower L and dining room is lower R. "Guest bedroom" is behind living room. Summer kitchen, our truck w/hay, & our pickup on garage foundation at far R**



**DAT 11-18: Upstairs after the tornado - Toews Brother's bedroom door @ L, Mom & Dad's bedroom door @ R. Note wallpaper and plaster laths in the boy's bedroom, and Carolina Blue sky @top center.**



**DAT 11-19: Upstairs after the tornado - Toews Brother's bedroom door @ L, Mom & Dad's bedroom door @ R. Note wallpaper and plaster laths in the boy's bedroom, and Carolina Blue sky @top center.**



**Jake Regier slide: Our house, summer kitchen, mouse house, concrete outhouse seat in front of propane tank, & machine shed, looking S from near steel grain bins. Note Co-op feed sacks, Galen's "Wheels" above stock tank, junk pile, clothesline in front of wash house, our pickup on garage foundation.**



**DAT 11-21: Machine shed with missing N side annex, looking W from near pig pen. Note 2 steel grain bins - one distorted w/roof missing, pull-type Case combine, windmill & "water-heater" water trough (far R). Roll of cribbing for top of silo at far L.**



**DAT 11-22: View of barn remains, house, summer kitchen, brooder house, mouse house, chicken house & machine shed, looking W from pasture. Note our truck full of hay bales & other farm trucks. George Janzen windmill visible just L of our swing set. Our pickup is on garage foundation.**



**Jake Regier slide: Remains of our big white barn, looking NNE from our corral. Note destroyed OG&E electric substation on 12 Acres, OG&E trucks, & Ruben & Sophie Thesman's place @ back. There are dead sheep under the pile of bales and dying sheep to the L.**





**Jake Regier slide: Close-up of barn remains & hay bales on hayloft floor. Metal corral gate and gate-post is in foreground, under wooden gate**



**Our WD-9 McCormick-Deering tractor on the barn foundation after most debris has been cleared away. Note the corral gatepost and gate have been re-installed (in front of tractor). Ruben & Sophie Thesman farmstead at far L; destroyed substation in center rear behind post.**



Jake Regier slide: Feedlot, feeder, silo, & silo shed, looking NE from our wheat field, beside the steel grain bins. Note ladder and top crib railing, silo blocks, cattle "oiler" attached to power pole, sheep in the pasture, & downed wheat. Who is that man?



**Jake Regier slide: Silo shed & silo, looking NNE - note ladder and top crib railing hanging on roof, silo blocks, & pickup stock rack @ extreme R. Ruben & Sophie Thesman home at back L.**



**An early photo following our May 1961 tornado - steers are still in what is left of our feedlot. Despite all the heavy concrete silo blocks littering the feedlot, none of the steers were injured!**



**TORNADO0002:** Silo shed and silo showing intact ensilage where blocks have been torn away. Feedlot w/clueless steers and self-feeder at far R. None were seriously injured & they stayed inside the electric fence even though no electricity. Sheep @ L & pig shed thru silo shed doors.

\*manure spreader (front of silo shed)  
plow (by one-way) & drill (extreme r)  
are also visible



TORNADO0003: Looking N from our garden patch towards the silo shed. Barn was at near R. Note our pickup on the garage foundation and garage roof to the R. Part of a steel grain bin roof is between pickup & roof. Our truck w/bales and one-way @ back, in front of silo shed\*.



**TORNADO0004:** Tornado debris from our house and barn in George Ediger's pasture, ~1/4 mile S of our home-place, looking SE from behind George's pond.  
[attempted picture adjustment; source unknown]



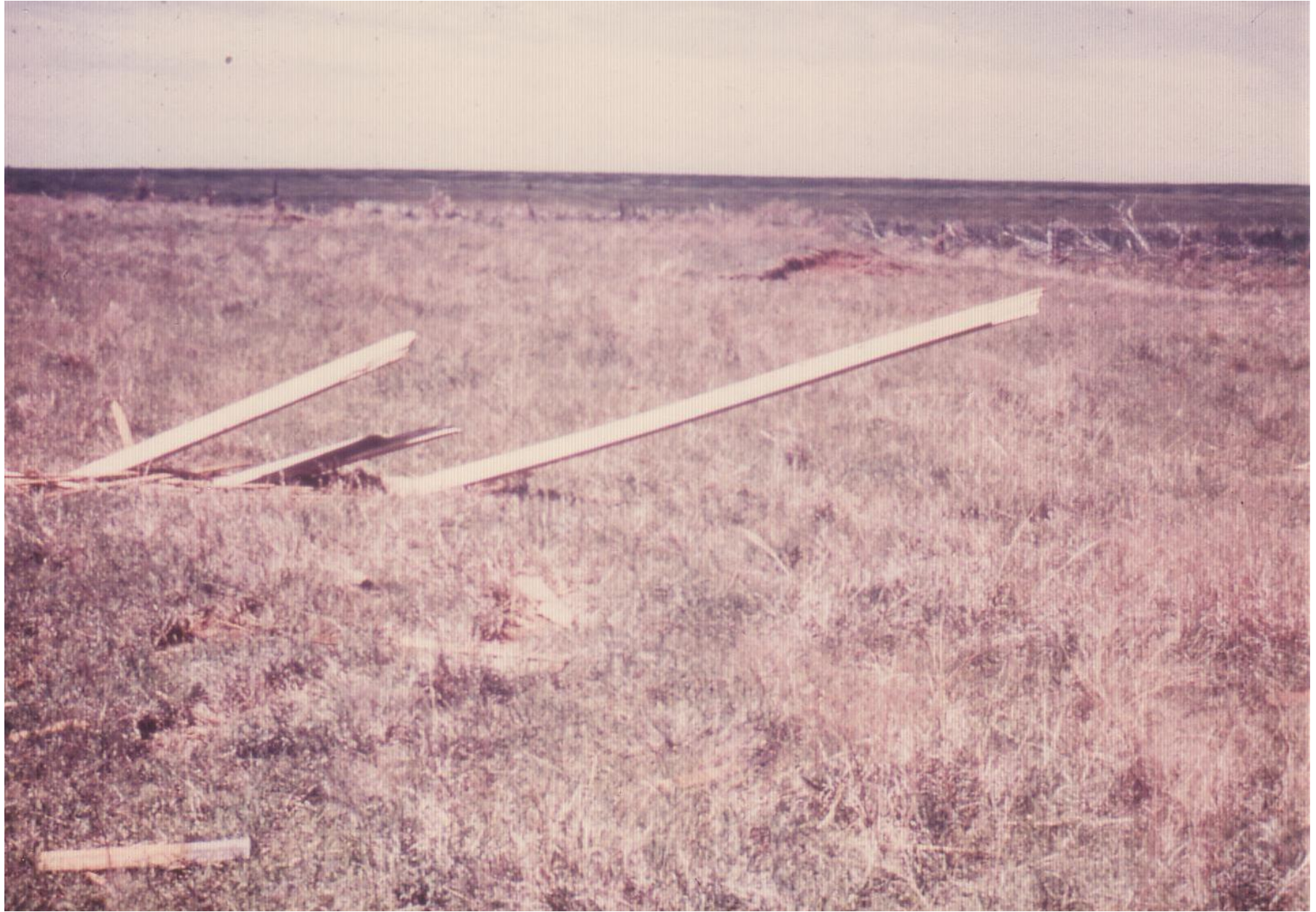


**TORNADO0004:** Tornado debris from our house and barn in George Ediger's pasture ~1/4 mile S of our home-place, looking SE from behind George's pond. [Non-adjusted picture]



**TORNADO0005:** Tornado debris from our house and barn driven into the ground in George Ediger's pasture,  $\sim\frac{1}{4}$  mile S of our home-place. Looking WSW towards George Janzen's wheat field.

[adjusted picture; source unknown]



**TORNADO0005:** Tornado debris from our house and barn driven into the ground in George Ediger's pasture,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile S of our home-place. Looking WSW towards George Janzen's wheat field.  
[unadjusted picture]



**TORNADO0006: Robert P (Bob) Voth in George Ediger's pasture S of our home-place, showing a barn rafter that was driven into the ground ~3 ft by the tornado. There were more than one of these. [adjusted picture; source unknown]**



**TORNADO0006: Robert P (Bob) Voth in George Ediger's pasture S of our home-place, showing a barn rafter that was driven into the ground ~3 ft by the tornado. There were more than one of these. [Non-adjusted photo of previous slide]**



Portion of roof from either machine shed or barn, now in *George Ediger's* pasture, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from our home-place yard. Maybe *Bill Toews* at extreme R?



**Jake Regier slide: Destroyed OG&E electric substation @ NE corner of 12 Acres, looking NNW from Wall Street. OG&E truck on Kremlin Blacktop @ R back**



Another view (source unknown) of the destroyed OG&E electric substation @ NE corner of 12 Acres, looking NNW from "Wall Street."





Photo taken in 1958 by PHOTOMAPS Belleville, Kansas ©  
AERIAL PHOTOS SINCE 1943. These reproduced online photos obtained from aerial photos.  
All references shall include the photo number appearing in white on this print.

This same 7 May 1961 tornado also wrought havoc on the farmstead of George Janzen,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile W of our home. Although the house and wash house were largely spared, the barn, shed, and other outbuildings were completely obliterated. This 1958 aerial photograph, looking ESE, was kindly furnished by Dennis Toews, grandson of George and Anna Janzen. The "Half-Section" road is just to the l of the left edge of the photo. The house was moved to Kremlin in the early 1960s.



**DAT 12-22: We salvaged lots of lumber from the house and barn and pulled lots of nails to build a very nice house along the Kremlin blacktop. Most all of the studs, lots of the floor and ceiling joists, & yes, roof sheathing too (barn siding), were from our house and barn! [~1962-63]**



This is a composite panorama of 2 pictures taken from the top of our silo looking S, 10 or more years after it was rebuilt following the tornado that took our house and barn in May 1961. The new sheep barn (N half is our old chicken house) is @ L - it sits on our old barn foundation. Our former garden patch with its elm trees is above our red pickup. Pig shed is @ lower center R, and summer kitchen, house porch/pillars, & mouse house are all visible. George Ediger pasture/wheat field is at upper l and George Janzen wheat field is at upper r.

Original slides are DAT 47-20 & 47-21, which were scanned backwards. 1/1974 by Myron Toews

For comprehensive information on our farmstead, with photos, diagrams, floor plans and more, see [David A & Rosa M Toews Farmstead](#) on our [ToewsVothKremlin website](#).

For much information on the history of Kremlin OK, Kremlin Schools, the railroad and local train wrecks, and much more, see our [ToewsBrothersKremlin website](#).

# Panorama of David A & Rosa M Toews farm, looking S from top of silo [1/1974]



- |                                     |   |                    |                            |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. House footprint                  | 2. Summer kitchen/wash house  | 3. Garage          | 4. "Mouse house"           |
| 5. Outhouse seat/floor              | 6. Machine shed to R  | 7. Pig pen and sty | 8. Gas pump/tank/post pile |
| 9. Sheep barn (old barn foundation) | 10. Corral  | 11. Garden patch   | 12. George Ediger pasture  |
| 13. Georgy Janzen Homeplace         | Orange line denotes approx limits of our "driveway" - visible loop originally used infrequently |                    |                            |

# Our 2<sup>nd</sup> tornado!

(Summer, 2009)

In the late summer of 2009, our silo shed again suffered major tornado damage, and our sheep barn was totally destroyed. This is the same tornado that destroyed the Morton building by our second home on the Kremlin blacktop (visible @ back L below) - currently owned by Mike & Janet Streck.

Slides from Myron & Anita Toews

Although the 40'x72' Morton building was destroyed, the flimsy white lean-to attached to its S wall survived intact (visible @ back L). See also next page.

Also note the bed frame in front of the silo - when I was in high school, this was used to convert our pickup into a "camper" with the addition of a tarp for cover. It fit perfectly in the holes for the stock rack on the pickup bed. Double mattress fit pickup bed perfectly. Great Salt Plains - here we come!





View from inside the damaged silo shed taken from the manger (feed bunk) where we used to feed cattle ensilage in winter.

Note "loft" above manger with pile of baling wire. The floor of this loft was made of old bridge planks (visible below wire) and we stored hay bales for cattle in winter up there.

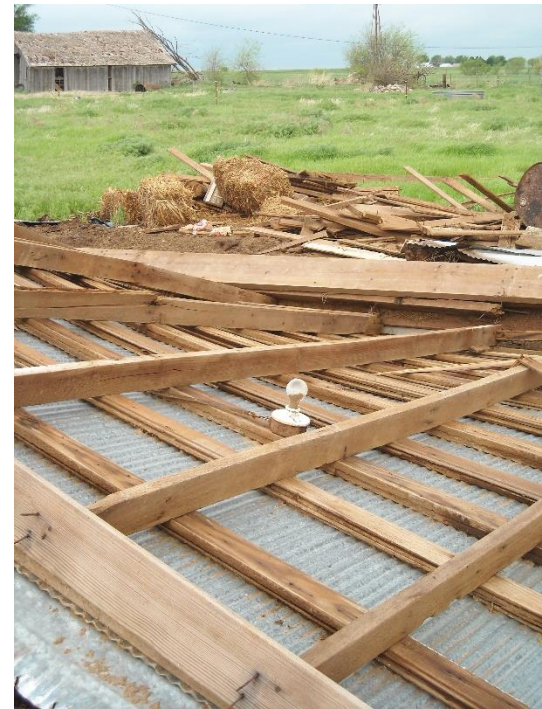
Galen and Myron Toews are viewing the room beneath the silo chute from which ensilage was obtained for feeding our cattle. Anita Toews 2009

Below: S interior wall of sheep barn with gate to lambing pen.





**Clockwise: interior view of silo shed; OG&E repairing high-line on Wall Street, sheep barn roof with intact light bulb; flimsy lean-to intact while attached Morton Building destroyed. Anita & Myron Toews**





Photos of our destroyed sheep barn after a late summer, 2009 tornado. Our heavily damaged silo shed is at back center in the photo at L.

Note our machine shed at center back of R photo - it withstood both tornados and lots more, but finally succumbed to the elements and to our removal of siding for the interior of our new bunkhouse on the Houghtaling Farm. Also note the corner of original concrete barn foundation at lower L and the intact light bulb on the destroyed roof section in this photo.







In the late summer of 2009, our silo shed again suffered tornado damage, and our sheep barn was destroyed. My brothers Galen (L) and Myron (R) are shown posing by the ruins of our sheep barn, shortly after the tornado. Our pole barn, constructed on the Kremlin blacktop after our 1961 tornado, and new home (now owned by Mike and Janet Streck) are visible at back R in the left photo.

The carcass of the barn owl was found as shown, "impaled" on the barbed wire fence W of the silo and silo shed. Owls still nest and nurture their young inside the silo.

Slides from Myron & Anita [Arrel's 2009H-MYRON & ANITA TORNADO folder]

And finally, slides of a 5 June 1966 tornado,  
taken by my Uncle Jake Regier  
from his front yard

As you will see, there were actually two funnels on this sunny Sunday afternoon.

It is worth remembering that these photos were taken 50 years before the advent of ubiquitous cell-phone cameras, so to me that makes these photos quite amazing. I believe Uncle Jake had an Argus C-3 camera for his slide photos.

Also note that the best slides of the 7 May 1961 tornado that destroyed our home and barn were taken by Jake Regier as well - we owe Uncle Jake a great debt for his excellent photography, well ahead of his time.

For some time-perspective, I had just graduated from Kremlin High School in May 1966.



Slide (#3) taken by my Uncle Jake Regier from his front yard on 5 June 1966. Note the oil well, custom harvester's combines, and bright sunshine. This was a Sunday afternoon and Ellis Toews was at our place visiting with me - we watched this tornado from our patio, but thought it was only a big dust devil! This is the tornado that wrought havoc on Uncle Jake and Aunt Ann Toews' farmstead.



A second, slightly later photo taken on 5 June 1966 - note the cattle grazing in the pasture and sun shining on the oil tanks at center. The Jake Rempel home-place is at left. [slides 8 & 11]

Following slides are from earlier in the sequence - these first two seem most dramatic.



Earliest photo of the 5 June 1966  
tornados photographed by Jake Regier

Slide #2

Slightly later, with movement to the SE



Slide #10

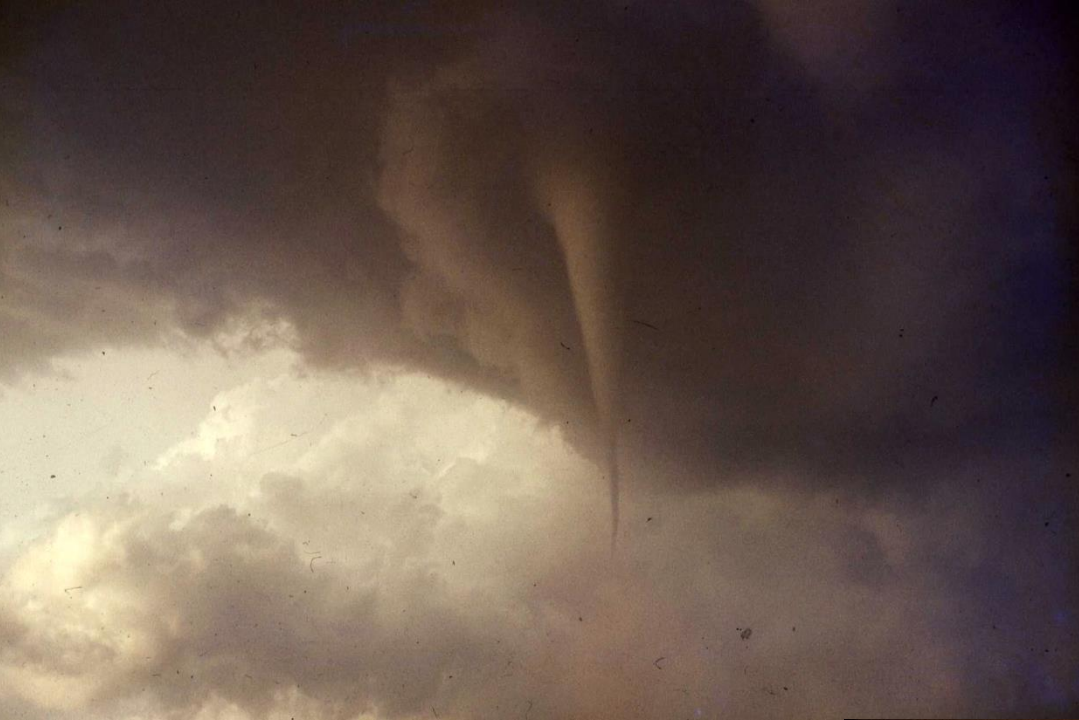


Slide #3

Note the diffuse funnel behind the oil tanks and second sharper, more distant funnel behind Jake Rempel home-place.



Slide #8



Slide #5

Closer views of the second funnel

Perhaps these two images are  
duplicates, from different scans,  
but maybe not.

Slide #12





The funnel is shown developing into a full-blown (pun intended!) twister at L, then a bit later, displaced SE of the oil tanks, at R below.

Slide #1

Slide #2



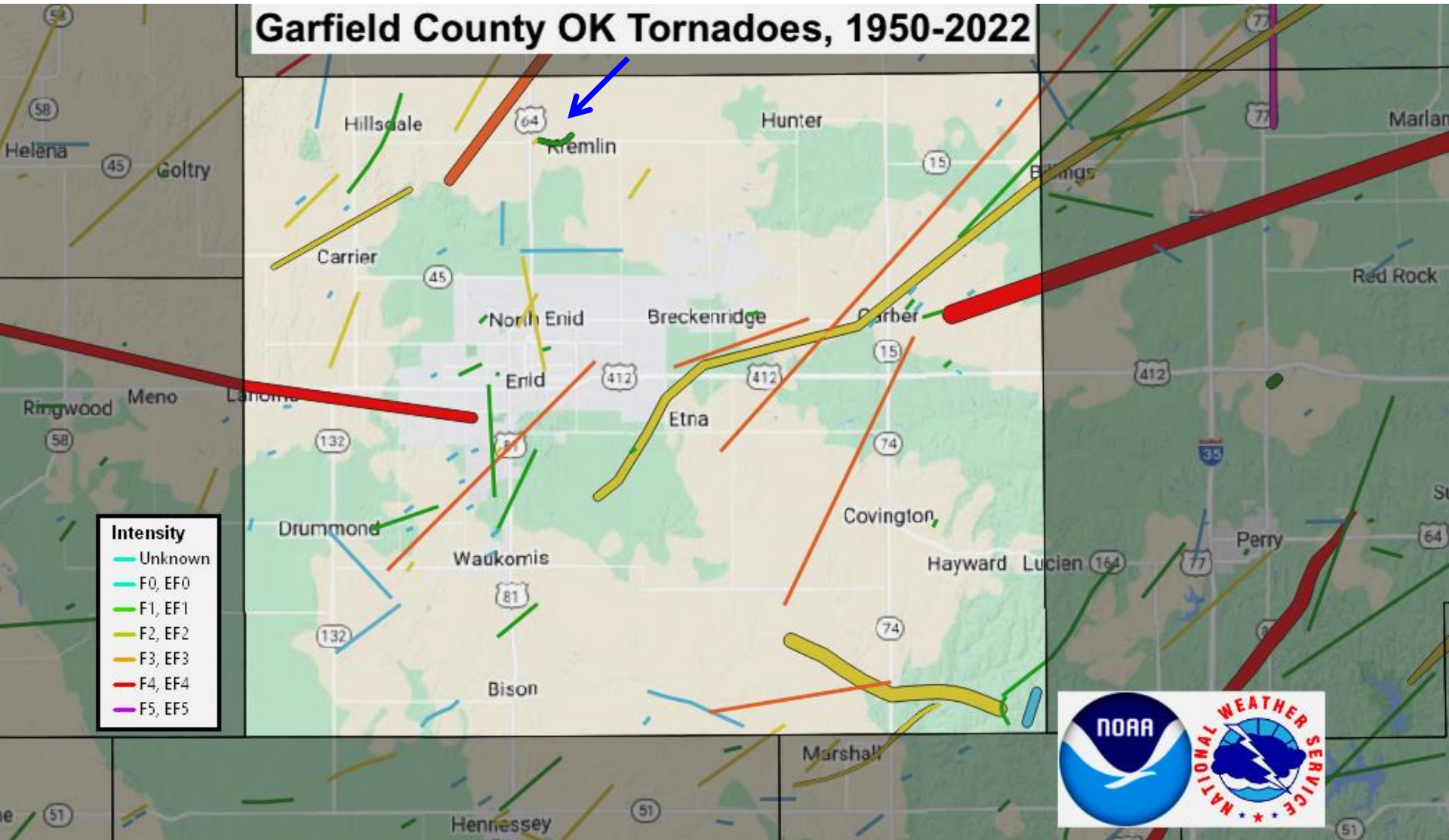


A partial listing of Garfield County tornadoes from the National Weather Service website is shown below. "Our" 11:30 PM tornado is an unlucky #13! Also note there were 4 different tornadoes officially recorded on 5 June 1966, when Uncle Jake Regier photographed the one close to his home (#21; along with several funnels in the air that did not touch down).

Garfield County, OK Tornadoes (1950-Present*)									
#	Date	Time (CST)	Path Length (miles)	Path Width (yards)	F-Scale	Killed	Injured	County	Path
1	04/27/1955	2100	0.1	10	F1	0	1	Garfield	near Garber
2	04/27/1955	2100	0.1	10	F0	0	0	Garfield	near Garber
3	04/02/1956	1945	18	100	F2	0	4	Garfield/ Grant	NW Garfield county - just SW of Medford
4	04/08/1956	2215	7	400	F3	0	4	Garfield	Waukomis - Enid
5	04/08/1956	2215	8	400	F3	0	0	Garfield	near Douglas - near Garber
6	07/17/1956	1000	0.1	50	F0	0	0	Garfield	4 NW Billings
7	06/24/1958	0200	0.1	10	F0	0	0	Garfield	W of Enid
8	11/17/1958	0808	39	10	F3	0	0	Garfield/ Noble/ Kay	Near Fairmont - near Blackwell
9	03/31/1960	1820	2	50	F1	0	0	Garfield	4 SE Garber
10	03/31/1960	1915	1.5	17	F1	0	0	Garfield	2 E Covington
11	04/16/1960	2005	0.1	50	F2	0	0	Garfield	4 W Waukomis
12	07/29/1960	1830	0.1	10	F2	0	0	Garfield	Near Enid
13	05/07/1961	2330	0.1	10	F2	0	0	Garfield	W of Kremlin
14	06/05/1962	2100	0.1	10	F?	0	0	Garfield	SE of Garber
15	10/20/1963	1640	6	10	F2	0	0	Kingfisher/ Garfield	7 WSW- 3 WNW Marshall
16	04/22/1964	1645	54	733	F2	0	1	Garfield/ Noble/ Kay	5 SE Enid - West side of Ponca City - 6 N Ponca City
17	04/22/1964	1730	28	10	F1	0	0	Garfield/ Noble/ Kay	5 NE Garber - Tonkawa
18	05/27/1964	1240	1	50	F1	0	0	Garfield	1 S Woodring Airport
19	04/04/1965	1730	0.3	33	F0	0	0	Garfield	4 NW Carrier
20	05/18/1965	2145	0.1	10	F0	0	0	Garfield	NE of Garber
21	06/05/1966	1830	4	10	F0	0	0	Garfield	4 N- 6 NE Enid
22	06/05/1966	1835	0.1	10	F2	0	6	Garfield	North part of Enid
23	06/05/1966	1855	4	67	F0	0	0	Garfield	South part of Drummond
24	06/05/1966	1900	6	10	F1	0	0	Garfield	SW part of Enid- 4 S Enid
25	09/04/1966	1245	0.1	10	F0	0	0	Garfield	5 SW Billings - near Garber
26	06/10/1967	2100	0.1	10	F0	0	0	Garfield	Just SW of Vance AFB
27	04/16/1969	1630	2	10	F1	0	0	Garfield	3 NW Enid
28	06/11/1969	1500	0.1	10	F0	0	0	Garfield	~4 E Carrier
29	04/26/1970	2030	4	50	F0	0	0	Garfield	5 SSW Drummond - Near Waukomis
30	04/30/1973	2035	1	33	F1	0	0	Garfield	Near Drummond
31	10/10/1973	1805	0.1	50	F1	0	0	Garfield	3 W Enid
32	06/08/1974	1430	0.2	23	F1	0	0	Garfield	2 E Breckenridge
33	05/20/1977	1815	4	100	F1	0	0	Garfield	Near Waukomis



National Weather Service map showing Garfield County tornadoes from 1950-2022. "Our" 7 May 1961 11:30 PM tornado is the short green curve denoted by a blue arrow.



If anyone has additional slides or photos, or memories of any of these three events, I would greatly appreciate hearing from you. Please send any comments and other materials to me at [atoews@hotmail.com](mailto:atoews@hotmail.com).

I hope you have enjoyed viewing these photos.

Arrel Toews