



Standing amidst the rubble that a few hours before was their home are Denny Nusser, 17, his brother Bobby, 14, and their sister Jillian, 11. Their home at 2318 Ave. K was leveled

along with the home immediately to the west at 2320 Ave. K. Photo by Steve Glowacki.

Furious 15 minutes devastates city with little advance warning

By JOE ARTERBURN

It was a furious 15 minutes that came with little warning: The Council Bluffs tornado of July 15, 1988.

It started as a thunderstorm hundreds of miles away across the flat plains of Nebraska. Late Thursday night, July 14, a thunderstorm developed over the southwest corner of Nebraska. Council Bluffs, 340 miles away, took no notice.

But the thunderstorm churned across Nebraska gaining intensity as it dropped warnings of

hail from angry green clouds that slowly spun in ominous rotation.

A National Weather Service severe thunderstorm watch was issued at 2 p.m. for people in eastern Nebraska. The storm was about 60 miles southwest of Council Bluffs.

A funnel cloud was reported at 3:20 p.m. near Gretna, Neb., 17 miles from Council Bluffs. Then reports of tree damage came from western parts of Omaha. Sirens in Omaha sounded at 3:31 as the storm roared northeasterly over the city.

The heart of the storm crossed the Missouri River at the Interstate 480 bridge. Numerous funnels danced under the low dark ceiling and the first reports of touchdowns were broadcast.

At 4:12 the National Weather Service called the 911 emergency communications center to warn of a possible tornado. Warning sirens sounded at 4:13 p.m. The tornado hit at 4:14.

Many residents did not hear the sirens as four funnels ripped through the city, branching out into a separate paths of destruction.

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