

Iris Askins (interview1)

Pete James (Interviewer): This is Mrs. Iris Askins. Iris, we appreciate you telling us about the stories of what you remember. What do you remember about that day in 1952?

IA: Well, it was on a Friday afternoon and very pretty, kinda hazy like, but it was a pretty afternoon. And we heard this roaring and they asked us if we wanted to see a tornado and silly me thought I would go and see it. So, I went out and all of the buildings around was going over my head. It was just a very distressing time. I was at the stockyard, and I had to go home and my husband told me I couldn't. And I showed him. So I went up Mulberry Avenue and I couldn't even get up there and had to climb trees all the way home. But I got there, and my home wasn't destroyed. But about four or five houses down, the houses were just flat. And one neighbor was in her bathroom, she and her son, screaming. The house was all torn up and they were in the bathroom. And we went and got them out. We had a neighbor on down a little piece farther that was killed. It took their house completely, and they found the body over on the railroad track.

Pete James (Interviewer): Did you actually see the tornado?

IA: Yes, sir.

Pete James (Interviewer): What did you see? Describe what you saw.

IA: Well, it just had a long tail. That's all I can tell you about it. I can just see it going through the air. way really. But the flour mill and all the wheat and all that stuff was up in the air flying all over us. Oh, it was just a most distressing time there ever was. One man followed me and just screaming for me to not touch the wires, but I was going to my mother and my children. I climbed trees and there were clothes in the trees and around in the yard from way over on the other side of town we learned later. We got the clothes out and washed them and we gave them back to the people.

Pete James (Interviewer): What about the people back then? What do you remember of how people got together and rallied together, the cleanup effort and all?

IA: Well, we all just worked night and day. I washed and ironed for days, and carried it up to I don't know what building, but somewhere up town. And the people who the clothes belonged to, they'd go by and pick up a lot of the things that was hanging there. But see, they were down in the mud. You'd just pull them out of the dirt a lot of them, and then a lot of them would be hanging up in trees, and you'd just pull them off of the tree. It was just an awful experience. I hope I never have another.