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**We're not in Kansas anymore ...**

□ **A group of scientists will search for tornadoes this spring to find clues to the storms' behavior.**

WASHINGTON (AP) — While most Americans try to avoid tornadoes, a small army of scientists and students will swarm across the nation's twister-prone middle this spring hoping to stand in storm's way.

In the second stage of a two-year effort, more than 100 students led by 20 scientists will pursue twisters over hundreds of miles, chasing, for days if necessary, across Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and possibly into Colorado.

Meteorological students beg for a chance to approach these storms, said Howard Bluestein, a University of Oklahoma professor who has been chasing tornadoes for 18 years.

"If you know what you're doing it's not as dangerous as it seems on the surface,"

added Harold Brooks, a meteorologist at the National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, Okla.

People chase storms both for scientific curiosity and "a certain level of excitement," Brooks said. "If you have a reasonable understanding of storm behavior, you can manage to put yourself in a safe position for observation."

Years ago Bluestein and bands of students roamed ahead of twisters in pickup trucks, trying to put a "tornado observatory" (Toto) in the path of the storms, which refused to cooperate.

Now they will scatter arrays of small instruments along the roadway ahead of twisters "to increase the chance of getting near one of them."

In addition, airborne radars will probe the motions within the storms, instruments will be launched on balloons, and small Doppler radars developed by Bluestein will be deployed on the ground to measure the wind. In 1991 one of these units clocked wind speeds

in a tornado at 286 mph.

In the first field season last year the researchers tracked 11 storms, including three tornadoes.

The prime target is the supercell, a long-lived severe thunderstorm that can generate tornadoes. While fewer than half of supercells produce tornadoes, when they do sprout a twister they are among the most violent on Earth.

Last year the researchers were surprised by a twister near Archer City, Texas, that moved west, turned northwest and then west again. The storm defied the usual pattern of tornadoes, which almost always move from southwest to northeast.

Later analysis showed that that storm developed very suddenly, in less than five minutes, in a manner quite different from the thought to produce tornadoes.

Bluestein said the twister developed near a gust front — an area of strong winds — and that that may have affected its unusual direction.

**Descendant pays debt owed to Sam Houston**

□ **The interest on the \$100 debt totaled about \$419,629,669.**

HOUSTON (AP) — It took 160 years, but pioneer Col. James J. Ross has finally made good on a \$100 debt to legendary Texan Sam Houston.

O.G. McClain, Ross' great-great-grandson, recently paid the debt to Sam Houston IV, great-grandson of Texas' first president.

"I hate debts, and I feel sure Grandpappy Ross did, too," McClain wrote to Sam Houston IV, whom he met through the Sons of the Republic of Texas. "Even though we may be a little slow in making this payment, we want to square up this account."

McClain, an 84-year-old retired geologist, said he discovered the outstanding debt while looking over his ancestor's estate inventory. Records showed that Ross hadn't paid the \$100 to Houston when he was killed on Jan. 14, 1835.

Neither Sam Houston IV, who lives in Katy, nor McClain, of Houston, knows how the debt was incurred.

"Perhaps it was for a horse," Houston said. "He was always buying and selling horses."

The descendants said Ross and Houston almost certainly knew each other. Both came to Texas from Tennessee and Arkansas and fought with Andrew Jackson.

McClain said he thinks his

great-great-grandfather was born about 1787 in South Carolina. He went from there to Tennessee. Family lore says he fought with Jackson in the battle of New Orleans.

Ross came to Texas by 1810 and became one of Stephen Austin's first 300 settlers, establishing his home near the present site of Eagle Lake. He later moved to a site near Fayetteville.

Houston came to Texas in 1832 and eventually became commanding general of the Texas revolutionary army, served as the republic's first president and as one of the state's first U.S. senators after Texas joined the union.

The long-overdue debt payment was donated to the Sam

**"I have debts, and I feel sure Grandpappy Ross did, too. Even though we may be a little slow in making this payment, we want to square up this account."**

— O. G. McClain, great-great-grandson of James J. Ross, debtor to Sam Houston

Houston Museum in Huntsville. McClain said he wouldn't even attempt to make good on the interest. At a rate that was probably about 10 percent, the interest would have grown to \$419,629,669 over the past 160 years.

"There's not enough money in Texas to pay for that," McClain said.

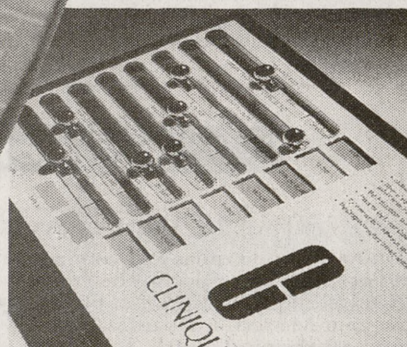
"I wasn't interested in collecting interest," said Sam Houston IV. "I was afraid that if I tried to do that I might have to settle up any old debts Gen. Sam might have left behind."

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