



America's Deadliest Twister: The Tri-State Tornado of 1925 (Shawnee Books)

Geoff Partlow

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Disaster relief as we know it did not exist when the deadliest tornado in U.S. history gouged a path from southeast Missouri through southern Illinois and into southwestern Indiana. The tri-state tornado of 1925 hugged the ground for 219 miles, generated wind speeds in excess of 300 miles per hour, and killed 695 people. Drawing on survivor interviews, public records, and newspaper archives, *America's Deadliest Twister* offers a detailed account of the storm, but more important, it describes life in the region at that time as well as the tornado's lasting cultural impact, especially on southern Illinois.

Author Geoff Partlow follows the storm from town to town, introducing us to the people most affected by the tornado, including the African American population of southern Illinois. Their narratives, along with the stories of the heroes who led recovery efforts in the years following, add a hometown perspective to the account of the storm itself.

In the discussion of the aftermath of the tornado, Partlow examines the lasting social and economic scars in the area, but he also looks at some of the technological firsts associated with this devastating tragedy. Partlow shows how relief efforts in the region began to change the way people throughout the nation thought about disaster relief, which led to the unified responses we are familiar with today.

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