

Very Active Tornado Season Another Classic La Nina Effect

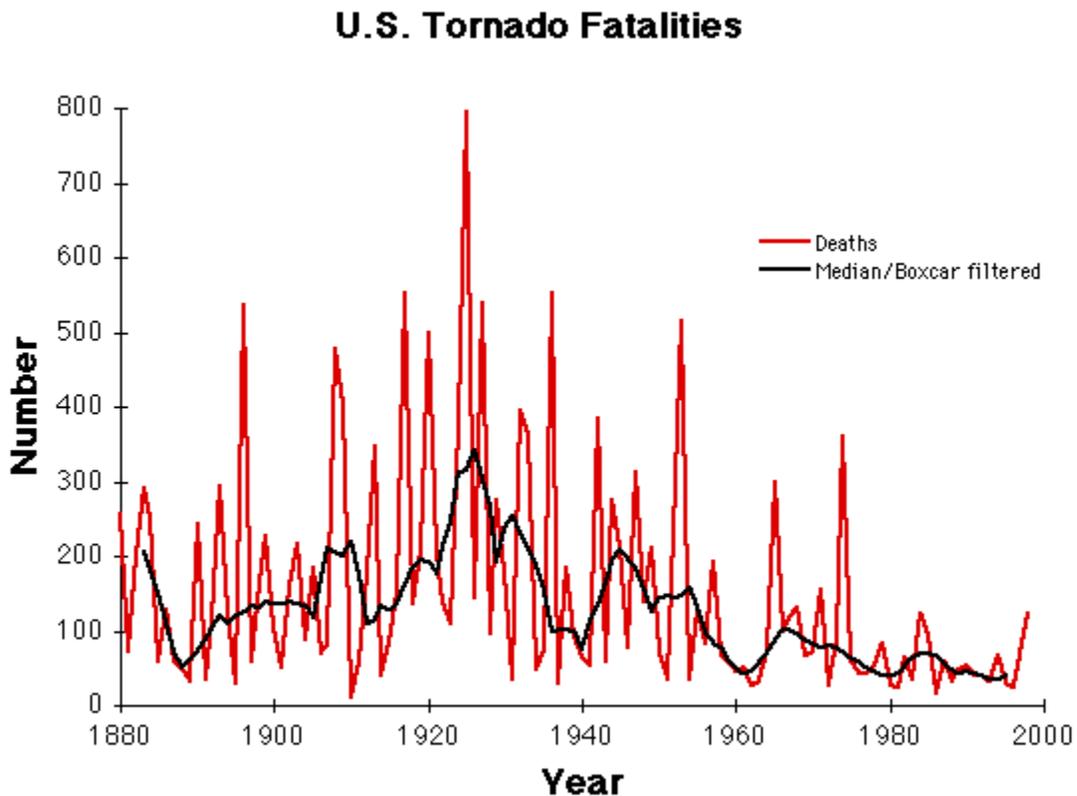
By Joseph D'Aleo, CCM

This winter and spring brought heavy (in places all-time record) winter snowfall, spring flooding, and now an active tornado season. All of these are classic strong La Nina phenomena. Brush fires now ablaze in Florida are also a common springtime La Nina phenomena.

Almost daily tornadoes have been in the news with 910 reported to date (as of 5 pm Sunday). 96 deaths have also been reported. We have not had a superoutbreak (yet) as we did in 1974 (The Great Superoutbreak) or 1965 (Palm Sunday Outbreak), but a lot of very active days.

Given the pattern with a strong suppressed jet stream and lots of high latitude blocking more active days can be expected.

The most fatalities from tornadoes occurred in the 1920s (peak 1928) (source NSSL). In recent decades, deaths were less with the exception of the two years with SUPER OUTBREAKS, 1965 and 1974 (both years coming off La Nina winters, in 1974, one of the strongest)



1965 PALM SUNDAY OUTBREAK

On April 11, 1965, what up to that time was the worst tornado outbreak in U.S. history hit several Midwest states, leaving more than 250 people dead, 1,500 injured and property damage approaching half a billion dollars. Following that deadly tornado outbreak, the NOAA National Weather Service underwent changes to improve severe weather forecasts and warnings, including establishing the Watch and Warning Program that exists today and the weather spotter program, SKYWARN.

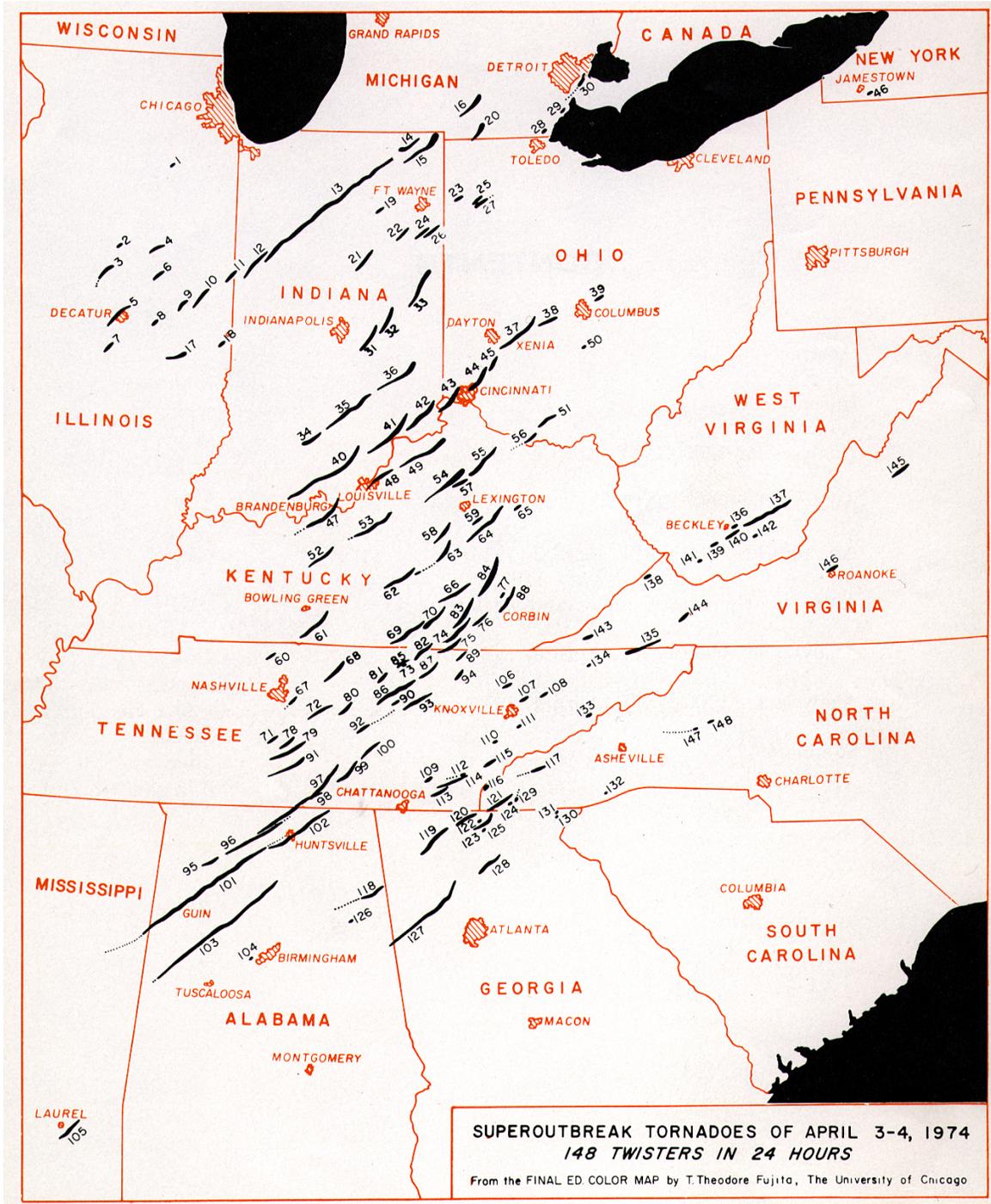


The Elkhart, Indiana tornado which killed 36 people on April 11, 1965

SUPEROUTBREAK OF APRIL 3-4, 1974

147 tornadoes touched down in 13 U.S. states on 3 and 4 April, 1974. Below is a map of them, with F-scale damage plotted beside each. [One more tornado touched down in Canada at Windsor ON, then lifted as it entered MI, for a total of 148. Since it did no damage in the U.S., it is not counted in the U.S. tornado database used to plot our map.] The outbreak killed 310 in the U.S., 8 in Canada, with 5454 U.S. injuries and 23 hurt in

Canada. 48 of the tornadoes were killers. Seven produced damage rated F5 -- the maximum possible -- and 23 more were rated F4.



GLOBAL WARMING A ROLE?

Don't let yourself be told this is the result of global warming. In fact, this month has been amazingly cool for the nation thanks to that blocking and suppressed jet stream.

