

## METEOROLOGY

# Midwest Drought Shows Up In Water Levels of Rivers

Gauge Readings on Little Rock, Mississippi, and Red Rivers Show Lowest Level Ever Recorded for July

THE UNPARALLELED drought in the midwest, soon to enter its fifth month, is showing up in the water levels of the great rivers—the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Arkansas and the Red—which are approaching new low marks at many stations.

At the Little Rock River gauge on the Arkansas readings are the lowest in the history of the station. The readings, prosaically told in Weather Bureau tables as minus 3.2 feet, reflect what is happening in the 158,000 square miles of land drained by the river above this point.

At St. Louis, where river height records go back 74 years to 1860, the gauge reading is the lowest for the month of July in the history of the station. And the same statement holds for the past four months of March, April, May and June.

The Mississippi and its tributaries (principally the Missouri) above St. Louis drained 691,000 square miles of land now drought-stricken.

Down at Shreveport, La., on the Red River levels are low for July but a bit above the all-time low recorded in November, 1932. 60,000 square miles of land are drained by the Red River at this point.

## Low in Summer Significant

M. W. Hayes of the River and Flood Division of the Weather Bureau warned that low levels taken indiscriminately throughout the year do not necessarily mean drought for at many stations low marks come in the winter months when the particular stream under consideration may be frozen as well as its tributaries. Low marks for summer months do have great significance, however.

"Gauge readings of very low stages," Mr. Hayes declared, "are a guide to the volume of water passing down a river but they are not an infallible guide simply because the cross-section area of a river often changes either because of silting or erosion." Frequent discharge observations, or measurements of the

amount of water carried by a river, are a better guide, he said.

The Great Lakes reflect the dry spell in lower levels. Only Lake Superior is higher than the 10-year June average.

The U. S. Lake Survey Notice to Mariners of the War Department for June lists Lakes Michigan and Huron as 1.59 feet lower for that month than the average level for June during the last 10 years. Lake Erie is 1.89 feet lower by the same standard. Lake Ontario is 1.96 feet lower.

Low lake levels bring trouble for certain harbors whose normal depth of water is just a bit more than the deepest draught lake steamers. A drop of one foot sometimes means a large boat may be unable to maneuver properly in the harbor.

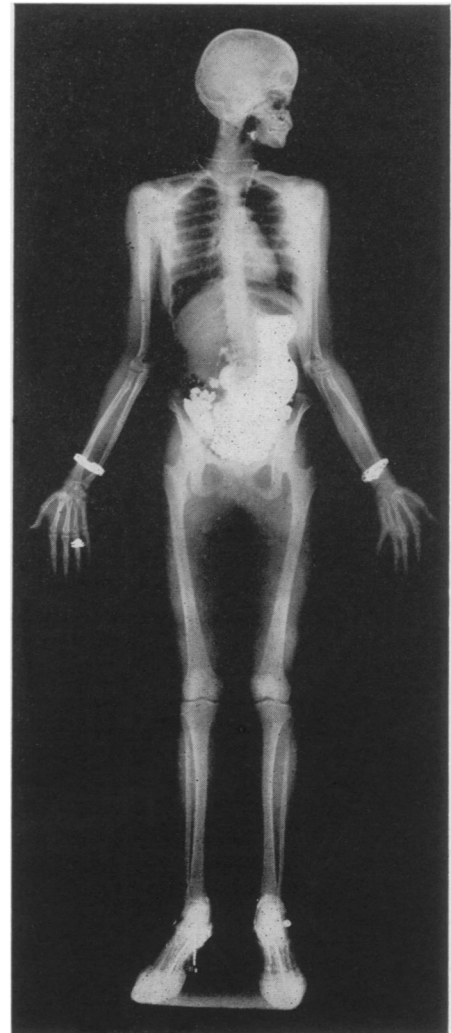
## Park Geysers Affected

Frequent newspaper items to the effect that the geysers of Yellowstone National Park are losing their power have called forth a protest from Horace M. Albright, formerly director of the National Park Service and for ten years superintendent of the Yellowstone.

These statements, Mr. Albright insists, do not tell the whole story. It is a well-known fact that the geysers and hot springs of Yellowstone Park do fluctuate from year to year, depending upon various natural conditions. Their apparent lessening of volume this year, or irregularity of action, as the case may be, he declared during a recent visit to Washington, is just another result of the drought. Geysers are formed through the collection of ground water, and when drought conditions prevail the geysers suffer, along with the wheat and the corn and other products of nature. When normal rainfall prevails, the geysers respond as do the crops.

*Science News Letter, August 4, 1934*

Two explorers will make a sledge journey 800 miles eastward across the Greenland ice cap, after which they will explore the mountain region north of Mount Forel.



"TAIN'T NO SIN"

*This young lady was not actually following the hint of the song and "dancing around in her bones." She merely stepped, fully clothed, before the piercing X-Ray in the Eastman Kodak X-ray research laboratory. In one second, this result, a beautiful life-size and full length portrait, was obtained. It is on exhibit at the Century of Progress.*

## ORNITHOLOGY

## Apoplexy Leading Cause Of Death Among Birds

APOPLEXY caused one-fifth of the deaths among birds in a group of cases reported to the British Aviculture Society. Pneumonia, concussion of the brain and enteritis were the other leading causes of death in this list.

If these facts surprise bird fanciers and veterinarians, it only bears out the contention of Dr. Donald R. Skillen of La Canada, Calif., that more should be known of bird diseases.

*Science News Letter, August 4, 1934*