

Drought Began in Spring

► THE DROUGHT conditions plaguing the Northeast, particularly Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, result from last spring's weather patterns.

Three cities, Scranton, Pa., and Binghamton and Albany, N. Y., have had their driest May and June in 50 years. Syracuse, N. Y., has had its second driest May and June since 1920.

Droughts are due not only to lack of rain but to the overall length of time without rainfall. Most of the Northeast has had only 40% to 50% of normal precipitation since mid-April. This is the vital growing season.

Surface weather producing this low rainfall is governed by the patterns taken by the meandering, high-level river of air known as the planetary wave, which circles the world. It flows in crests and troughs, sometimes having three, sometimes four or five of each girdling the globe.

The pattern that produced the Northeast's drought was one in which there was a trough off the East Coast of the U.S., and another off the West Coast, with a weak crest over the country's center.

The trough off the East Coast allowed

cool, dry air from the north to pour farther south than usual. As it descended from high altitudes to the ground, this air warmed and dried out even more. Thus for long periods, moist, tropical air over the Northeast, precipitation-producing, was much less frequent than normal.

Storms often take paths just to the east of a trough, so the ocean area off the northern East Coast has been getting plenty of rain.

In contrast, the Southeast had been having more than its normal rainfall, and some counties had been declared disaster areas because of heavy rains.

The trough off the West Coast brought cool weather to the Far West, since cool Pacific air moved down to the east of it. The pattern of troughs and ridges was more like that found in the winter and spring months, not the summer, Jerome Namias, head of the U.S. Weather Bureau's extended forecast section, told SCIENCE SERVICE.

Summer weather patterns are dependent upon the temperatures of ocean waters and the character of the soil in absorbing or reflecting sunlight, Mr. Namias said.

• Science News Letter, 82:79 August 4, 1962

GENERAL SCIENCE

News From Science Clubs

► MANY science clubs have continued activities during the summer and have reported the following to Science Clubs of America.

The members of the SENIOR SCIENCE CLUB of Warren High School, Warren, Mich., are continuing their study of radiation through the summer months.

THE SOS SCIENCE CLUB of Bedford High School, Bedford, Va., conducted a Workshop Conference on Science Youth Activities in cooperation with Science Clubs of America on July 17. The 100 participants were teachers and club officers representing 40 high schools in eight states.

Collecting biology journals for the University of Nigeria and science textbooks for Asian pupils has been one of the main activities of the SCHOOL SCIENCE CLUB of Franklin High School, Somerset, N. J.

The SCIENCE CLUB of Batok East School, Singapore, holds an annual science exhibition and is building a school science museum. The members collect specimens for their museum during their field trips.

SCIENCE CLUB members at Cheney High School, Spokane, Wash., made a small electric computer for the use of the school math department and a reflecting telescope for club use. Each member has a home science project and the club membership tripled during the past school year.

THE SCIENCE AND CAMERA CLUB of St. Adrian High School, Adrian, Minn., sponsored the Visiting Scientist Program, made a study of the area's water supply, and developed a darkroom to be used by the club and others in the school. To finance

their project, Photography and Darkroom, they held candy and bake sales.

The PHY-ZOO-CHEM-BOTS of Pinecrest School, Sylacuaga, Ala., report that their most effective club projects were school displays, nature trails and starting a science library.

Send reports on summer science activities of your club to Science Clubs of America, 1719 N Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

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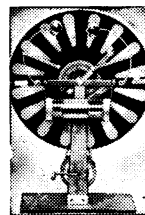


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