

METEOROLOGY

Great Weather Cyclopedia Completed at Harvard

THE FIRST complete weather encyclopedia for the North American continent has just been assembled by Harvard University scientists in cooperation with government meteorologists of the United States, Canada, Alaska and Mexico.

Based on detailed weather tables compiled during the last half-century or more throughout the continent, the atlas affords a bird's eye view of the area's broad climatic features that is expected to be of particular use to meteorologists both in forecasting and in research on the origins of various weather phenomena. It will also be useful as a convenient source of information on North America's wide-ranging climate. Ultimately, through improved forecasting it may also benefit weather-dependent industries, especially agriculture.

Analyses Are Featured

In addition to exhaustive tables, diagrams and maps, the work features an interpretive text discussing the continent's large climatic provinces, temperatures, pressures and winds, humidity and evaporation, rainfall, cloudiness, fog, thunderstorms, tornadoes, sunshine, climatology of the free air, climate relations to health and crops, and other weather factors.

Also featured are analyses of such phenomena as the droughts of 1930-35, the accompanying dust storms, and the human significance of weather variations.

The survey has been largely prepared by Prof. Charles F. Brooks, director of Harvard's Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory, who completed the original

compilation and analyses begun jointly with the late Prof. Robert DeC. Ward of Harvard. The work has been published as part of the massive German Koppen-Geiger Handbook of Climatology, which upon completion will present important weather facts of the entire world.

Most interesting to the average reader, perhaps, is the survey's revelation of what might be called weather championships.

Sunshine Centers

Outstanding sunshine centers of the United States, for example, are the California-Arizona borderland, which averages more than 300 clear days a year, and St. Petersburg, Fla., which ordinarily has less than five sunless days a year. The country's cloud center, on the other hand, lies over the state of Washington, where coastal cities have about 180 overcast days a year.

Pacific coast areas also hold the country's records for rain and snow, the survey shows, with annual falls of 200 inches found in the Olympic mountains of northwestern Washington, more than five times the average of the northeastern coast. Here too, are the nation's heaviest rains, with occasional runs that last from 30 to 40 days in a row. The Great Lakes region runs a close second, with spells of rain of from 20 to 30 days' duration. Record for the wettest month goes to Helen Mine, Calif., which in January, 1909, had 69 inches of rain.

The Snowy Mountains

Heaviest snowfalls are found on the western flanks of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges, which have an average of 35 feet each winter. Record fall was in 1906 when 75 feet fell on Mt. Tamarack, near Alpine City, Calif.

Turning to the driest part of the country, the survey awards the palm to southeastern California, southwestern Arizona and western Nevada, where rain averages only eight inches annually. It is quite common for this area to have five winter months without drop of rain or flake of snow.

New England, in contrast, has the country's evenest precipitation, a little over three inches a month to give a total of 40 inches in the normal year.

RADIO

April 13, 5:15 p.m., E.S.T.

A DINOSAUR MONUMENT—Dr. Barnum Brown of the American Museum of Natural History.

April 20, 5:15 p. m. E.S.T.

THE FLUID OF LIFE—Dr. William H. Howell of the Johns Hopkins University.

In the Science Service series of radio discussions led by Watson Davis, Director, over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Thunderstorm center of the nation lies along the central and eastern coast of the Gulf of Mexico with 70 to 90 such storms a year. Low spot for them is San Jose, Calif.—one a year.

Most savage cold waves for severity, suddenness, and frequency occur in the East. Three or four such waves are felt in this region every winter. The severest blizzard ever recorded in the East, in March, 1888, had wind velocities that averaged 25 miles per hour, reached a peak of 75 miles per hour. Drifts 40 feet deep were piled up.

Lightning kills between 500 and 700 people annually in the United States and twice as many are injured, the report declares. Largest mortality occurs in the Ohio Valley and the Middle Atlantic States. Lightning fires take an annual toll of \$12,000,000 or more a year.

Science News Letter, April 10, 1937



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