

PROGRAM..... CHATS WITH THE WEATHER MAN ..... RELEASE Wed, Dec. 1, 1926

ANNOUNCEMENT: The Weather Man, whose regular Wednesday evening chat comes to you from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through this station, is in a reminiscent mood tonight. With December already here, -- and the old year turning grey, -- the Weather Man has chosen to talk about Freak Weather. Especially the Freak Weather of 1925-'26. So stand by.

\* \* \* \* \*

"From my earliest recollections," confesses a Nebraska weather man, "most storms have fascinated me, producing a feeling of awe but not of fear. The roar of the blizzard, -- the growl of thunderstorms with their vivid stabs of lightning, -- the shrieking squall of high winds and the crash of trees that fall before them, -- the driving wind and rain of a moderate hurricane, all have thrilled me.

"But I had seen all these. A tornado, I had never seen. So I fancied that the opportunity to study a right good tornado, at close range, would furnish a really wonderful experience.

"Now I didn't particularly ask to have a tornado made up for my own special benefit. I hoped that one might occur sometime when I was around. I wanted to be a rooter from the sidelines, so to speak. I missed our big 'twister' of Easter, 1913, and have regretted it ever since.

"On the evening of April 6, 1919, I had my chance.

"I remember I was returning from work that evening and had reached a point only a few hundred feet east of my house, when I heard that horrible grinding, metallic roar that heralds a tornado in full blast. Through the twilight, I could see a great, dirty-brown, gyrating column rushing straight at me from a few hundred yards to the southwest.

"Ah! Here at last was the opportunity for which I had waited so long! Now I was to have that really wonderful experience! A second look at the writhing thing, and all my desire to observe a tornado at close quarters vanished and retreat was in order. Though not in training for such a sprint, I smashed all records in that sprint for home. And yet it seemed I hardly moved in that mad dash for my house which I hoped to reach in time to get my household into the storm cellar. It seemed that the tornado was changing its direction in order to intercept me and destroy my

home. But, by the time I reached my destination, the wind had passed to the east. Its center passed over the starting place of my race for life. We escaped.

"Fortunately the path of this storm was narrow and through a sparsely-settled region, so no lives were lost, -- only a few people were injured, -- and the property damage amounted to only a few hundred thousand dollars.

"But had I not taken to my heels, I might have had a wonderful experience. A change of mind on tornadoes came with that second look I threw over my shoulder, and I have had no desire for close observation of 'twisters' ever since".

Tornadoes although they occur every year are only one form of weather. The past year or two has furnished examples of a dozen other types. In the next 6 or 7 minutes, I want to speak of a few of them.

When we mention circus freaks, it brings to our mind pictures of abnormal, queer beings. Like Jo-Jo, the dog-faced boy, -- the fat lady, -- or Whatisit, the fire-eater. Tornadoes, dog-days, Indian Summer, chinook winds, are oddities of weather. Average, or ordinary weather, makes little impression on us. Ordinary weather continues week after week and no one objects. But let a week of unseasonable weather prevail, and hundreds of people register a powerful kick, and, --if they can't change the weather, -- they want to change the weather MAN, at least.

For over a year now, the weather has been decidedly abnormal in some parts of the United States. It has shown greater extremes, and many freaks. For instance, let's take northeastern New York State. January broke the record for low temperature, --- February for high temperature, -- March for highest wind velocity ever reported for this section, -- April for the greatest snowfall,---and May for continued cold, with snow later in the month, and in larger amounts than ever before reported since records have been kept in Canton, New York.

Perhaps no more disagreeable day for late in May has ever been experienced in that region than that of May 23 when the temperature was just barely above the freezing point. Pellets of snow stung folks' faces. Icicles three inches long hung from apples trees and there was snow and slush to wade thru. It seemed more like March than May.

Freakish weather, during this period, was not confined to the United States. Reports from Siberia, Russia, parts of Asia, and even Arctic regions, showed that folks in those places were having queer weather too.

During this period an electric storm visited Kansas and charged the wire fences so that every barb of the fence gave off a tiny electric bulb of light. Even the horns of steers driven through the storm area, glowed with a tiny light on the tip of each horn. Stoves became so highly charged that gloves were necessary to handle the lifter, so as to prevent painful shocks. And yet no clouds were reported and no rain fall.

Record breaking drought threatened the water supply of many cities in the south and eastern sections of the country. The hunting season was closed by proclamation in the Adirondacks during the fall season.

Snowfall records of 100 years were exceeded during April and October in parts of Maine last year, in spite of the sayings of the oldest inhabitants that we never get as heavy snows now as they did when they were boys or girls.

The 18 months period was capped by the most destructive tornado ever reported anywhere. It occurred early in the spring in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana sections.

Please don't ask me to explain these conditions. No one can tell why they occur. That does not mean that there has been a change in climate, or anything of that sort. Sometimes the weather holds to the uninteresting normal that usually goes to make pleasant and agreeable weather. It is apt however, to break out at some place, any time. Scarcely a year occurs in which a weather record is not broken somewhere.

When we think a weather record has been broken we look into our records and find that the same thing has occurred many times within the period of written history.

As a rule we remember the unusual. We forget the things that are happening every day. That's one reason why we sometimes think the climate's changing. Everyone hears the older folks say that the "old fashioned winter" is a thing of the past, and "when I was a boy, we had sleighing from Thanksgiving to Easter".

But some of the records of the last two years will provide much food for discussion in years to come.

Investigations of old records are constantly being made, and while there is more or less evidence of "cycles" in various weather elements, -- especially temperature and rainfall, -- these so-called "cycles" have not been accepted by many distinguished meteorologists.

These investigators, however, have shown conclusively that climatic

Chats by, etc.

-4-

changes are so small that they are negligible, and that occasional "old-fashioned" winters <sup>as well as</sup> ~~wet or dry~~ summers may still be expected.

Last summer is a case in point. June was the wettest month on record in parts of southern California. It was immediately followed by nearly the driest July on record in the Carolines. What may be expected, therefor, in the way of weather is very uncertain. But the climate is another story, and you may depend on its stability. We prepare for winter by laying in an average supply of coal. But we aren't surprised if seasonal variation requires a ton or two more -- or perhaps leaves us with a surplus in the bins.

So the climate goes on, providing us an endless account from which we may draw funds of expectation and speculation. Veterans of many winters speak of hard ones back in the 'Seventies, -- and we wonder if they were any worse than the winter of 1917-'18. They refer with conviction to a dry spell in the 'Eighties, and we wonder if it was any worse than the summer of 1925.

For winters come and winters go, but man cannot remember when there has not been winter.

Good night.

\* \* \* \* \*

ANNOUNCEMENT: Some of our listeners undoubtedly have interesting stories to contribute to the weather mans weekly chats. Sit down and write in your own words any incident you believe will be of interest and send it to this station or direct to the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

## **ERRATA NOTICE**

One or more conditions of the original document may affect the quality of the image, such as:

Discolored pages

Faded or light ink

Binding intrudes into the text

This has been a co-operative project between the NOAA Central Library and the Climate Database Modernization Program, National Climate Data Center (NCDC). To view the original document, please contact the NOAA Central Library in Silver Spring, MD at (301) 713-2607 x124 or [Library.Reference@noaa.gov](mailto:Library.Reference@noaa.gov)

HOV Services  
Imaging Contractor  
12200 Kiln Court  
Beltsville, MD 20704-1387  
July 23, 2010