

UNITED STATES
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OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF
INFORMATION

PROGRAM..... Chats by the Weather Man.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: The Chats by the Weather Man, one of our regular Wednesday features from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, gives us, this week, a "Worms eye" view of the weather extremes over the United States. Again we introduce the Weather Man.

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'Phone rings.

"Hello. Am this the weather brewery?"

"Yes; this is the Weather Bureau office."

"Well, this am Mis' Brown -- Mis' Sapphrony Brown. Is it a gain' to turn cold? My neuralgia has been awful bad and I thought it might get better if the weather would change."

"We are predicting fair and colder weather, with temperature down to 20 degrees above zero," I assured her.

We had a busy morning in the office that day. Next came a call from the Railroad Company's general manager's office. The railroad didn't want a report for medical purposes, however. Railroads can't get neuralgia very well.

From the poorest washerwoman to the biggest commercial house in the city, calls came in all morning. The same reply was given to them all.

Then a note of alarm crept in.

A wild rumor of an approaching cold wave swept over the city. We were swamped with 'phone calls. Rumor had it the temperature would fall to 20 degrees BELOW zero -- a full 40 degrees colder than the minimum named in our forecast. Some people said this report had come from our office. Others said it came out of the air by radio. Still others declared it had come by wire.

The people were panicky. They recently had had a bad financial scare. There had been one severe cold wave, and now they were afraid of another -- a vastly colder one.

Well, what was I to do?

Whole town was against me. Railroads, newspapers, schools, construction companies, public utilities -- every body and everything had taken fright.

I got cold feet myself -- but kept a cool head and stood by my guns at 20 degrees ABOVE zero. If the mercury went down -- I would go down with it.

HUT THE COLD WAVE NEVER CAME. And I was saved.

Often people ask us about the weather in other parts of the United States. We Americans are a restless people -- always moving about -- always looking for the mythical pot of gold at the end of some brighter rainbow. Naturally, we want to know what the weather's like at the end of the rainbow. So we ask the Weather Man about it.

You can find about any kind of weather you want in the United States.

For instance, California. This state can boast that it contains, almost side by side, one of the hottest spots on earth: DEATH VALLEY, and among the pleasantest year-'round climate: the southern coast region. The heaviest snowfalls are found in the high Sierra mountains. The least rainfall is in the Death Valley region.

The coldest spot in the United States -- outside of Alaska -- is not in California, but in the eastern part of Montana. Near Miles City the temperature fell one day in January, 1888, to 65 degrees BELOW ZERO.

And the hottest -- the Greenland Ranch in Death Valley. One day there the temperature registered the sizzling high mark of 134 degrees ABOVE ZERO. This is the highest temperature ever officially noted on a Weather Bureau instrument.

If the temperature should rise to that point in humid, or moist, portions of the country, the population would be nearly wiped out. In a dry region the cooling of the body, due to evaporation from the skin, helps to offset the effect of the high temperature. You've all heard the old saying, "It isn't the heat; it's the humidity." At Greenland Ranch it seems to be the heat.

The wettest region in the United States is on the Olympic Mountains in the state of Washington. At Clearwater, on the western slope of those mountains, in Jefferson county, there is an AVERAGE of 128 inches of rain and melted snow in a single year. No other large section of the United States has as much. Yet, only about 70 miles from Clearwater, in the Port Townsend region, but on the eastern side of the Olympics, the Annual amount is but slightly more than 20 inches. The high mountains cut off the supply of moisture from its ocean source. Somewhat further east on the leeward side of the still loftier Cascade Mountains, there are almost desert conditions. In a few sections of that region, the average yearly precipitation is only about 7 inches.

There is no spot on the mainland of the United States that has wholly escaped freezing weather. And yet, Key West, Florida, which is not on the mainland, has always been frostless.

Of the cities that have way-below zero temperature, Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul, are the largest.

The driest large cities -- from the standpoint of precipitation, of course -- are San Francisco and Los Angeles. They are practically without rain in July and August. The important city having the least annual range of temperature is San Francisco, California.

California, usually thought of as a land of fruit, sunshine and flowers, has also within its borders the region of greatest snowfall in the United States. This occurs in the Sierra Nevada mountains near Summit, Calif. There the snowfall averages about 35 feet and as much as 65 feet has occurred one winter. However, Paradise Inn, on Mt. Ranier, gives Summit a good race for the snowfall record and is not much behind..

Snowfall in many places varies greatly from year to year, as for instance Walla Walla averages 24 inches per season, but in the winter of the big snow (1915-16) 77 inches fell. During the winter just preceding that one, only 2 inches of snow fell in Walla Walla.

Many people think the climate is changing. They think, for instance, that we don't have as much snow as they did when Grandad was a little shaver. The figures on file don't agree with the old folks' memories. Severe winters stick in their minds. They forget the mild ones. For instance, I myself remember back about 39 years when the snow drifted over the eaves of the chicken house.

And so it goes. Day after day, the Weather Bureau goes on: -- describing the climate of a certain region for the benefit of home-seekers -- answering 'phone calls from ladies with neuralgia -- giving out information to information seekers, curiosity-seekers, markets, railroads, washerwomen. All use the weather reports with growing trust and confidence.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: You may look forward again to this period next week for another of the series of Weather chats from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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