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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,
tells of:

TIMING DISTANT THUNDERSTORMS

Thunderheads are very often seen so far away that their flat bases are hidden by intervening elevations or are actually below the horizon. In such cases the distance of the storm and, if it is approaching, the time of its arrival, may be closely estimated by the use of a measure or pencil, in the same manner as that employed where the cloud base is used. The pencil or measure is held upright in the bend of the forefinger, supported firmly by the thumbnail. The arm is held at full length and the distance measured from the eye to the pencil. The pencil is shifted up and down until the distance from pencil end to thumbnail covers the space between the horizon, taken as the level of the eye, and the summit of the tallest turreted cloud which is assumed as four miles above the ground, instead of the one mile employed when the base of the cloud is considered.

The ratio of the height-of-pencil measurement to the eye-to-pencil distance determines the distance of the storm.

Thus, assuming the height-of-pencil distance to be 3 inches, and the eye-to-pencil distance 24 inches, the ratio is one to eight, which, with the 4 mile cloud height, gives a distance of 32 miles. Or if the height-of-pencil distance is 4 inches, the ration being 1 to 6, the distance is 24 miles. Assuming the rate of travel of the storm at 25 miles an hour, a storm 32 miles away, if approaching the observer directly, should arrive in not over an hour and 20 minutes; a storm 24 miles away in about one hour.

(Tomorrow: Lightning Measures Storm Speed.)
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