

No. 68

A Science Service Feature

July 30

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

EASTERN HOT SPELLS FROM NORTHWEST WINDS

The extreme hot spells, which, interspersed in generally cool weather, characterized the first half of this summer in the northeastern quarter of the United States and adjoining Ontario and Quebec, were remarkable in that they were caused by hot winds from the northwest instead from the southwest, as is usual. Because of this wind direction the weather was hot and also dry, and so less muggy than in the ordinary hot spells of other summers.

The air flowed from one to two thousand miles over dry ground heated from early morning to late evening by the sun blazing through a nearly cloudless sky. Such large volumes of hot air were sometimes involved, starting from the Great Plains, that even the Great Lakes, cold as they were, seemed to have little more than local influence on the temperature. The chilling which did occur may have condensed some of the water vapor and so dried rather than moistened the passing air.

The usual southwest wind of hot weather cannot prevail for long without importing so much moisture that clouds soon screen the earth, and local thunderstorms cool its surface. The air does not get so hot, but humidity makes the heat oppressive. We swelter rather than bake.

-----  
(Tomorrow: The Ragged Fracto-Cumulus)

All rights reserved by Science Service

Science Service,  
1115 Conn. Ave.,  
Washington, D.C.