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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,  
Secretary, American Meteorological Society,  
says:

HURRICANE SEASON IS HERE

The season of West Indian hurricanes, most destructive of all storms, is now at hand. Such disturbances seldom occur excepting in the late summer and early autumn. They are cyclones of an intensity exceeded only by the tornado, but instead of being a few rods in width, their path of destruction may cover several hundred miles. They differ from the typhoons of the China Sea in name only. An average of about five annually are known to occur in the West Indian region. While most of these touch some portion of the Gulf or Atlantic States, an average of less than one a year is severely destructive.

Such a hurricane caused the Galveston horror of Sept. 8, 1900 when 6,000 lives were lost as a result of the frightful wind and its accompanying flood of sea water and terrific storm waves which pounded through the city from the Gulf. Even more intense was the hurricane of Sept. 29, 1915 which swept the lower Mississippi Valley, the indicated wind velocity attaining 130 miles an hour.

Hurricanes originate in the tropics somewhere north of the Equator, breeding over calm, warm waters under the nearly vertical, blazing sun. They move in a west-northwesterly direction until they reach the latitude of westerly winds, when they recurve and move in a northeasterly course. Some hurricanes recurve before reaching the Florida coast, in which case they may not even be noticed on land. Others advance until on the recurve they cross the Gulf of Mexico, when the storm center may pass over the eastern United States from the Gulf to the St. Lawrence Valley, gaining speed of progress as it advances. While their intensity diminishes over the land, they usually continue to bring flooding rains and high winds.

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(Tomorrow: Autumn Frosts Approaching)

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