

No. 100

A Science Service Feature

Sept. 5

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

DUST DEVILS

While the whirlwind in its extreme form, the terribly destructive tornado, is fortunately unfamiliar to most people, especially in the eastern states, everyone, whether living in city or country, is familiar with dustwhirls or dustspouts, or dust devils as they are commonly called in the deserts of the southwest where they are most common and form on a larger scale. In the country on a hot day a dustwhirl is sometimes seen running along a road, sending a column of dust up in the air, spinning like a top. In the cities they gather up scraps of paper and other light debris and scurry along the street or across the yards.

When the sun on a clear, still morning heats up the air close to the ground until it is much warmer than that a few hundred feet aloft, chimneys of updraught are formed which rotate at much speed. In the desert they sometimes carry dust several hundred feet in the air, and are seen moving slowly along the ground, conspicuous at a considerable distance.

The Apache Indians used to make use of dust-spouts as signals in the desert, creating them by the artificial heat of the blazing spines of a column-like cactus which is common in the Southwest. Under right conditions enough heat was thus obtained to start the whirling updraught.

(Tomorrow: The Mugginess of Lake Shores)

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