

No. 141

A Science Service Feature

Oct. 23

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

THE NAMING OF INDIAN SUMMER

How the periods of warm, calm weather which arrive almost invariably in late October or in November came to be known as Indian Summer has been variously explained. The most commonly accepted explanation is that the American Indians recognized it as a season certain to come at least once and in some years more than once, and depended upon it as a time for final preparations for winter, in the storing of their late crops, whatever these were, and in making ready their winter lodges.

Another version is that the early settlers attributed the blue haze which is characteristic of the season to the smoke of fires set by the Indians on the western prairies, and bestowed the name for that reason. Also, it has been suggested that the fickleness of autumn weather, with its "Fool's Summer", as Indian Summer is called in Europe, may have led to the use of "Indian", in view of the settlers' idea of the fickleness and foolishness of the aboriginal character. Yet another suggested possibility is that the name was bestowed by some early traveller, who, familiar with the dry, hazy weather of India, recognized a similar kind of weather here. The term "Indian Summer" has been applied for some time by British mariners to the fine weather of the cool season on the Indian Ocean.

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(Tomorrow: Tur and Feather Ballacies)  
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