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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

CAUSE OF THE ICE STORM

The ice storm occurs usually when it is cold at the earth's surface, with rain falling from warm, moist air aloft. The ideal condition for a dangerous storm is when the ground has been cooled to below the freezing point and the air above it is also well below 32 degrees, while the higher levels are warm.

This combination may arise in any one of three ways; one where warm, moist air arrives over a layer of residual cool air at the ground; another by cold air coming in below from the north, while a warm current from the south arrives above; and the third, when arriving cold air from the north or west pushes in under a raincloud.

In any case, the mass of cold air in the path of the warm wind causes the latter to rise, and in so doing to cool by expansion to such a degree that much of its moisture is precipitated as rain. The raindrops freeze quickly when they strike a cold object. Consequently, drops coming in contact with vegetation or other surfaces which are below the freezing point, are quickly converted into ice. Continuing rainfall, constantly increases the accumulations, sometimes to a great thickness.

(Tomorrow: The Great Ice Storm)

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