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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
discusses:

TORNADO SEASON IN THE SOUTH

The tornado season is now opening on the southern plains and lowlands. Farther north, in the region from Missouri to Ohio, it will probably not be warm enough nor moist enough to favor tornadoes before May; while tornadoes usually do not occur in the upper Mississippi Valley till June or later.

To produce a tornado, excessive convection is required. In March and April, conditions in the South are right for violent overturning of the air. The season is far enough along for the air to become hot and moist at the surface, and yet the air is still cold aloft. There are strong temperature contrasts between north and south winds, and cyclones are in the prime of their spring vigor.

It is not surprising, then, that when a strong, V-shaped low with high winds, sharply contrasted in temperature and direction, passes over hot moist plains, an occasional intense whirl develops into the dreaded tornado. The Weather Bureau never forecasts tornadoes; their occurrence is so local and so erratic that the forecast could be of little service and would occasion unnecessary alarm.

(Tomorrow: Dust Storms)

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