

No. 307

A Science Service Feature

May 6

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
tells why:

WHY FOGS ARE QUIET

Most people do not have a chance to go up into the clouds, but occasionally a cloud forms on the ground for their benefit. For fog is very much like a sheet, or stratus, cloud. When air "saturated" with moisture is chilled by nocturnal cooling or contact with a cold snow surface, or body of water, condensation occurs on particles in the air as well as on the surfaces. Myriads of tiny droplets reflect the light in countless directions, so that rays can not pass through the fog directly and it often becomes impossible to see objects at a distance. Fog also forms from the "steaming" of lakes or warm rain.

Windiness, however, will prevent the formation of fog or quickly clear away one already present, unless on a hill or highland the "fog" is really a low cloud. With a strong wind, mixture tends to prevent local chilling of the lower levels and turbulence is constantly drying the air by causing it to rise and precipitate some of its moisture as rain. If small fog drops have already formed the wind will throw them down or aloft. Hence with a south wind rain, low clouds hit the hill tops but practically never reach the ground. As a rule, a fog can be produced only in a calm.

(Tomorrow: Average May Weather)

All rights reserved by Science Service

Science Service,
Rooms 327-330 - Northwest Corner,
B and Twenty-first Sts.,
Washington, D.C.