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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University.

GREAT TORNADOES

This year has started out with a bad tornado record - the extensive group of tornadoes occurring on March 18 caused an unusually large loss of life, about 800 dead. This was the greatest tornado disaster since February 19, 1884, when 57 tornadoes occurred on a single day, sweeping through eight southern states and killing 1200 persons. A single tornado at St. Louis, Mo., in May 27, 1896, caused the greatest property loss on record - about \$50,000,000.

The loss of life and the number of people injured in the recent group of storms is the greatest that has occurred any time as a result of tornadoes within such a restricted area. While the property damage may not exceed that of \$13,000,000 sustained in the Lorain, Ohio, tornado of last June, this recent group of storms was much worse taken together than the single big one that struck the Ohio city.

As our country becomes more and more densely populated we must necessarily suffer greater and greater casualties and property damage from the occasionally occurring tornadoes. Unfortunately, there appears to be nothing we can do about it. We can neither predict the localities to be struck, nor can we readily escape the fury of the storm when it is upon us. We must merely accept as one of the dangers of life in the United States the possibility of sudden death or destruction of property by such wind storms.

(Tomorrow: "Cyclone" vs. "Tornado")

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