

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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CONTRASTED SIDES OF EASTERN HIGHLANDS

Out in San Francisco they say, "Well, how is the climate on your street?" Local differences in weather are not usually so sharp, but the bear that goes over a mountain to see what he can see, may see quite different weather on the other side. Last December, our eastern highlands proved such a barrier, the two sides affording contrasted weather more strikingly than usual at this season.

On the west, Syracuse had the dullest December on record - 30 days cloudy and one partly cloudy, not a single clear day in the month. Snowfall occurred on about two-thirds of the days. During the last ten days of the month and on into January, snowfall was a daily occurrence, a trace to two inches falling mostly between 7 and 11 a.m.

East of the Appalachians. December was generally fair and dry, with little or no snow before Christmas, and then there was nearly a week of clear snowless days at the close of the month.

The reason for the contrast is not difficult to find. Damp, chilly air from the Great Lakes, moving prevailingly from the west or northwest during the period mentioned, had to rise over the highlands. The work of expansion cooled this air enough to precipitate some of its moisture. Once the crest was passed, however, the air was on the down grade, being compressed and warmed and becoming drier in consequence, hence the clear skies over the Atlantic slope.

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