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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

DAWDLING HOT SPELLS

In the eastern United States and Canada, every summer has its hot spells. In summer we do not have strong, clearly defined centers of high and low pressure; therefore, the weather does not change rapidly but tends to stagnate. Hot spells usually come on gradually and may last even a week or two.

Conditions are most favorable for a hot spell when the pressure is relatively high over the southern states and a weak low is moving slowly across the northern plains and Lake region. With this pressure distribution, warm southerly winds prevail over the northeastern states, the sky is generally clear, though the air is likely to be hazy and well supplied with water vapor. Strong sunlight sends the thermometer up to 85 or 90 degrees, perhaps, on the first day of the hot spell. As the southerly wind continues during the night, and the moisture in the air checks cooling by radiation, the temperature remains above 70 degrees, and the next day starts hotter than the first. Near the coast or Great Lakes, hot spells are likely to be interrupted by cool winds off the water. Local thundershowers sometimes give temporary relief. Finally the hot spell is broken when a weak low moves into the heated region, attended by cool northwest, north or northeast winds.

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21st and B Sts.,
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