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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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HURRICANE SOURCES

Tropical cyclones, or hurricanes can be produced only by a special combination of circumstances, on account of which their season is largely restricted to late summer and early fall. Our West Indian hurricanes, the typhoons of China, the cyclones of the Indian Ocean and South Pacific are all first cousins. All these storms form over warm oceans in the belt of equatorial calms known as the doldrums. But the doldrums do not stay over the real geographic equator, rather, they travel back and forth with the "heat equator" or region of greatest heat, following the sun north in our summer. Tropical cyclones will not develop except at times when the doldrums are at least eight or nine degrees north or south of the true equator. Twelve or thirteen or more degrees away seems to be the most favorable distance. Near the equator there would be insufficient deflective force from the earth's rotation to develop the spiral winds of the storm.

Over the Atlantic, because of the greater land mass in the northern hemisphere, the heat equator, and, therefore, the doldrums, are always north of the true equator. Consequently there are no tropical cyclones in the South Atlantic. In the North Atlantic, the favorite hatching spot for hurricanes is the region of the Cape Verde Islands. From this point, they cross the Atlantic with the trade winds, give the West Indies a good blow and then typically "recurve" in the Gulf region and proceed inland or up the Atlantic coast towards the northeast, controlled by the general southwesterly winds of middle latitudes in the eastern portion of the continent.

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