

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University.

WET IN MID WEST

Week after week we have read of torrential rains and floods in various parts of the Mid-West, particularly in Iowa, Illinois, southern Kansas, and northern Oklahoma. The floods caused some loss of life locally, and greatly damaged structures and destroyed growing or harvested crops. The continued wet weather prevented the completion of the threshing of small grains, which vigorously sprouted in the shocks. The total damage is to be counted in tens of millions of dollars.

From the end of July to the end of September the rainfall at Peoria, Illinois, and Hannibal, Missouri, was 20 inches, and at Iola, Kansas, nearly 22 inches, or three times the normals for these nine weeks. Des Moines and Keokuk, Iowa, and Springfield and Cairo, Illinois, and Terre Haute, Indiana, received 15 to 19 inches. Such totals were not made up of heavy rains every week, though the continuity of wet weather was, such that in Iowa and Illinois more than half of the nine weeks had rainfall above normal. In the wettest weeks the rainfall was commonly three to five inches, and occasionally six to eight.

The general form of the wet belts on the weekly rainfall maps was characteristically a band 100 to 200 miles in width and about 1000 miles in length, lying in a west-southwest to east-northeast position from the eastern edge of the Great Plains to the Appalachian Mountains or the Atlantic seaboard. The oscillations of this wet belt carried it to southern Minnesota, the southeastern third of the lower peninsula of Michigan, and southern New England on the north, and to Arkansas and Tennessee on the south.

Persistent and recurring troughs of low pressure, the disturbed meeting zone of diverse winds between the ~~the~~ southeastern high and itinerant northern highs overlay this wet region, and today's evaporation of yesterday's rain water helped supply an abundance of vapor for the precipitation in tomorrow's overturnings.

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