

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

HURRICANES FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

Of the seven hurricanes that have affected North America in 1926 four came from the tropical Atlantic, not improbably from the low pressure region near the coast of Africa, and three from the Gulf of Mexico and Western Caribbean. It is noteworthy and typical that all these storms of eastern origin appeared before the autumnal equinox, while two of the three of western origin came after that time, at the end of September (Vera Cruz), and the third week in October (Havana). The other western storm struck the Louisiana coast in August.

The eastern storms generally have a west-northwestward movement along the southern edge of the great Atlantic high, which is dominant in subtropical latitudes till September. This year's crop was no exception. Most of the storms recurved northward and northeastward on rounding the western end of this high in latitudes 30 to 35.

The western storms usually move more northward, and in October recurve northeastward at about latitude 25. Thus while the early and mid-season hurricanes strike our subtropics in paths leading west-northwestward, the late season storms cross these nearly at right angles toward the north-northeast. The tracks of the Nassau and Miami hurricanes and that of the Havana hurricane were typical of this seasonal difference.

The reason for the different late season track is bound up with the weakening of the Atlantic high at this time and the development of a trough of low pressure from the West Indies toward Newfoundland, following roughly the course of the warm ocean currents. In accordance with this distribution of pressure and the coolness of North America the general winds carry western Caribbean cyclones northward and northeastward.

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