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March 5, 1928.

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed February 23, 1928.

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CAMPANIUS AND HIS WEATHER JOURNAL

Toward the middle of the seventeenth century a small Swedish colony, known as New Sweden, was established near the present site of Wilmington, Delaware. A fort was erected near the mouth of Christiana Creek in 1638, and hither came in 1643 a Swedish clergyman, the Rev. Johann Campanius, who remained in the colony about five years.

Besides translating the Swedish catechism into the language of the Delaware Indians, Campanius found time to make notes of the weather and climate, and he kept a regular weather journal for every day of the years 1644 and 1645. The original journal no longer exists, but an abstract of it, in which the weather is summarized mainly by 10-day periods, was published at Stockholm in 1702 by his grandson, Thomas Campanius Holm, as a separate chapter of a book entitled "Kort Beskrifning om Provincien Nya Swerige" ("Short Description of the Province of New Sweden"). There is (or once was) a copy of this rare work in the Philadelphia Free Library.

So far as known, the journal of Campanius was the first daily record of weather ever kept in America. At the period in question meteorological instruments were in their earliest infancy, and none were used by this observer.

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21st and B Sts.,  
Washington, D.C.