

Released on receipt
but intended for use
September 8, 1928.

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed September 1, 1928.

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

MEASURING WEATHER

Mankind has always paid a great deal of attention to weather, but the idea of measuring it is comparatively modern. Only a few centuries ago, for example, though people knew when the air was hot or cold, they could not tell how hot or how cold, because they had no thermometers and there was no sort of scale for expressing temperature; just as today we have no instruments or scales for measuring the intensity of a smell. Measurements of rainfall are supposed to have been made in some parts of the Orient in ancient times, but there were none in the western world until the middle of the seventeenth century. Before the days of Torricelli the very existence of atmospheric pressure was unknown. The effects of atmospheric humidity were observed by Pliny and other ancient philosophers, but the measurement of this weather element dates, so far as known, from about the year 1660 of our era.

Some kinds of weather measurements are of quite recent origin. Among them is the measurement of "visibility." Scales and instruments for measuring this element were devised mainly during and since the world war.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

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