

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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JESUIT METEOROLOGY

The pioneer organization of weather observers in Europe was one founded by the Grand Duke Ferdinand II of Tuscany in the year 1654. The details of organizing this service were entrusted by the duke to his chaplain and secretary, Luigi Antinori, who was a Jesuit, and most of the observers, some located in Italy and some in neighboring countries, belonged to the same society.

Such was the beginning of a long list of Jesuit activities in the field of meteorology. Not only do the Jesuits now operate a large number of important weather observatories in many parts of the world, but in certain regions they maintain also extensive networks of minor weather stations. The principal meteorological organization in China is directed by the Jesuits from the observatory of Zikawei, near Shanghai, with a large system of reporting stations both on the coast and in the interior. The Philippine Weather Bureau, though now maintained by the government of the islands, was founded by the Jesuits and its principal officials are still members of the society. In Cuba there is a network of weather stations directed by the Jesuits of Belen College. The meteorological service of Madagascar is under the Jesuits. In Spain there are several Jesuit weather observatories and stations, including the great geophysical observatory of the Ebro, near Tortosa. Other notable meteorological establishments belonging to the order are located at Bulawayo, Rhodesia; Stonyhurst, England; Ksara, Syria; Calcutta, India; Kalocsa, Hungary; and elsewhere.

Last but not least, the three institutions most famous for studies and predictions of tropical hurricanes are Zikawei Observatory, Manila Observatory and Belen College Observatory -- all founded and ^{now} operated by Jesuits.

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