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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE DATE OF INDIAN SUMMER

Any prolonged period of mild, calm, hazy weather in autumn—especially
late
one occurring rather/in the season, after a so-called "squaw winter" of cold gray
skies and snow flurries—is popularly described as Indian summer. As this type of
weather may prevail intermittently through the autumn, there is often room for dif-
ference of opinion as to which particular spell of it is the "true" Indian summer.
In some years there is little or no weather of the Indian summer type, while in
others it is very prevalent.

Thoreau, in his notes on the meteorological conditions at Concord, Mass.,
during the ten years 1851-1860, records the occurrence of Indian summer weather on
dates all the way from September 27 to December 13; a range of 77 days. Prof. Hind
prints in his "Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition", published
in 1860, a table compiled at the Provincial Observatory at Toronto, according to
which during the 20 years 1840-1859 Indian summer began there on dates ranging from
Oct. 5 to Nov. 20 and ended on dates ranging from Oct. 11 to Nov. 23. Its shortest
duration was three days, its longest eleven, and the average six. The table records
two occurrences in 1844 and in 1857.

J.W. Schaeffer, of the U.S. Weather Bureau, published in 1902 an analysis
of the weather records at Milwaukee, showing not only that Indian summer weather
varied widely at that place in its date of occurrence, but also that between 1872
and 1900 there were eight years in which there was no weather of this type. Bela
Hubbard, in his reminiscences of old Detroit, tells of one such spell of weather,
in the year 1849, that lasted continuously for 42 days.

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