

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

WEATHER SMELLS AND SOUNDS

Dr. W.J. Humphreys, in his admirable book on weather proverbs, explains why people with sensitive noses can "smell rain". Decaying organic matter in ponds, ditches and swamps produces much foul gas, which accumulates in bubbles under the mud. An approaching storm is preceded and attended by a considerable decrease in atmospheric pressure. This, in turn, diminishes the pressure on the mud-imprisoned bubbles, which expand, break and come to the surface in such numbers as to render the air in the vicinity perceptibly offensive.

S.K. Pearson tells in a recent article how, while living in Jersey City, he was able by the use of his nose and ears to predict the weather without getting out of bed. He says:

"Northeast winds brought tobacco fumes from a tobacco factory, and rain or snow. Steamboat whistles from the Hudson denoted east winds and bad weather. Odors from a soap and perfume factory were wafted by a southeast wind, when fog would often follow. Whistles from a railroad were plainly heard when it was balmy south. Smells of low tide denoted southwest winds and mild weather. Smoke odors with westerly winds from the Jersey Meadows brought good weather. Pronounced whistles from two other railroads were indicative of a cold northerly wind."

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