

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

TEXAS NORTHERS

Northers are not peculiar to Texas nor are all parts of that state equally subject to these winds, but the "Texas norther" is a well-defined feature of the winter climate of the state. It is a high northerly wind that brings a sudden drop in temperature. Prof. Joseph Henry noted sixty years ago that "on one occasion the temperature fell in the course of three hours from 75 degrees Fahrenheit to a degree sufficient to produce ice an inch thick."

Prof. Harrington wrote of the winds that, in Texas, "sweep down from the north with high velocity and a head of cloud, dust and sand, suddenly changing the temperature from almost tropical to frigid. The norther can be seen coming from a long distance and its approach greatly disturbs animal life. ... The norther is one of the most injurious features of weather over the western plains."

And Prof. Ward says: "The wild sweep of the norther over the open plains is dreaded by all who are outdoors exposed to its chilling fury. Shelter is sought when possible. Indoors, huge fires are quickly lighted, windows are closed, and the passing of the tempest is impatiently awaited. The sudden fall in temperature is especially disagreeable to human beings and injurious to stock and to crops because of the warmth and mugginess which precede it."

Northers are classed as "wet" or "dry" according to whether or not they are attended by rain, which, when it falls, is likely to coat outdoor objects with a sheet of ice.

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