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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FREEZING OF GREAT SALT LAKE

Last January much newspaper publicity was given to the fact that a layer of ice had formed on the surface of Great Salt Lake, Utah; one of the saltiest bodies of water in the world. The freezing point of salt water is lower than that of fresh, and in the case of this lake, the water of which is nearly 23 per cent. solid, it is supposed to be from 20 to 25 degrees below zero. During the 32 years the U. S. Weather Bureau has maintained a measuring gauge on the lake the latter has never before been reported frozen.

At the end of the first week of January a coating of ice two to three miles square and in places from a quarter to nearly three-quarters of an inch formed on the water. "What probably happened," says Mr. J. Cecil Alter, in charge of the local Weather Bureau station, "is that the fresh water flowing in from the Mena and Garfield sumps spread out over the surface of the lake. An unusually quiet condition of the lake permitted this fresh water to remain on the surface without being mixed with the brine underneath. This is almost as extraordinary a condition as if the brine itself had frozen."

The minimum air temperature at Salt Lake City on the day the ice formed was 18 degrees above zero.

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