

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed March 5, 1932

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THUNDERSTORM DATA

Some instructive statistics relating to thunderstorms at Cincinnati covering a period of 20 years were compiled a few years ago by W. C. Devereaux, of the U. S. Weather Bureau. For the purposes of the record in question a thunderstorm was defined as "a commotion in the atmosphere in which thunder is heard, each separate cloud mass attended by thunder to be considered an individual thunderstorm." The smallest thunderstorm, as thus defined, observed at Cincinnati occurred on a generally clear summer day. A small thin cloud formed in the southwest, and, as it moved directly toward the weather station, one dull peal of thunder was heard, after which the cloud dissipated as quickly as it had formed.

The largest recorded number of days with thunderstorms was 17 in July, 1917, with 27 separate storms. In June, 1919, there were thunderstorms on 15 days, while the number of separate storms was 30, which exceeded the number in July, 1917. About 90 per cent. of all the individual storms observed moved from a westerly to an easterly direction, and more than half of these moved from southwest to northeast. Only a few of the slow-moving "heat" thunderstorms moved either directly northward or southward, and in some of these cases it was a question whether the storm was moving or merely developing toward north or south. The tendency of thunderstorms to move eastward was very pronounced, even under what appeared to be adverse conditions. Thus some storms were seen to move eastward when clouds (strato-cumulus) of moderate altitude were moving in the opposite direction; also when there was a fresh surface wind from the south.

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