

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

THE "MONTANA MONSOON"

Several graphic descriptions of chinook winds and their effects in suddenly changing winter into summer (or at any rate into spring) are quoted in Professor Ward's "Climates of the United States." Here is one by H.S. Thompson, written at Butte, Montana, in 1905:

"One need only stay for a short time in the Missouri valley region of Montana to see the effects of the chinook - popularly called here 'the Montana monsoon.' At Great Falls the winds were preceded by three or four days of clear, cold weather, with the temperature ranging from zero to 20 below. A general rise in temperature began with a slight wind from the southwest. Each day the winds grew stronger and the temperature rose. On the third day after the winds were observed I noted a temperature of about 40 degrees for the whole of one day. I drove twenty-four miles one day across perfectly level bench land, and it was remarkable with what steadiness the wind blew - not a gust or flurry was felt."

Again, from another correspondent in Montana (dated Butte, December 10, 1910):

"Here is something that actually happened one day when I was in Great Falls two years ago. There had been a cold spell for over a week; the temperature had fallen to more than 30 degrees below zero, and averaged 20 below for the week. I shall never forget that cold week. We used to sit on the radiator in the office all day to try to keep warm, and when we got away from the radiator we were cold again in a few minutes. This particular day at about a quarter past seven when I went to breakfast it was about 20 below, and about 2 P.M. the temperature was well above 32 degrees above zero. The main street in Great Falls was water all over, where previously there had been several inches of snow. This chinook lasted three or four days, and it was nearly like summer while it lasted. A chinook will last from a few hours to a few days. It blows from the southwest, and is not only warm but also very effective in melting the snow."

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