

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed January 7, 1933

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THE YACHTSMEN'S PARADISE

A publication issued by the Maryland State Weather Service calls attention to the remarkable immunity from dangerous winds enjoyed by Chesapeake Bay, which, we are told, has been nicknamed the "yachtsmen's paradise." This body of water is "pocketed" from the Atlantic Ocean, with which it connects indirectly, the inlet being set at right angles to the main trend of the Bay. The eastern shore forms a wide windbreak, which gives protection from the strength of Atlantic storms. We read:

"The Bay is like a rather narrow, elongated lake, trending north-south, its shores are quite irregular, broken by estuaries and the broad mouths of rivers; but the average width of the Bay, east-west, is only about 15 miles, while its length, north-south, is about 180 miles.

"The dimensions of the Bay are, therefore, not large enough to favor the development of very high winds, such as occur on the open seas or on the larger lakes. Again, owing to the fact that the strongest winds of the Middle Atlantic coast region most often come from a westerly quarter, especially northwest, these strongest winds sweep the Bay the narrow way and travel a much shorter distance over water surface than if they came from north or south, and thus the orientation of the Bay with respect to the winds is not favorable for the attainment of very high wind velocities.

"Furthermore, the most frequent storms of winter pass eastward over the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Valley, too far north, as a rule to cause severe winds on the Chesapeake; while the tropical hurricanes of summer and autumn, that sometimes are destructive on the Southeastern and the Gulf coasts, seldom come as far north as Chesapeake Bay, except with greatly diminished strength."

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