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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 14, 1933

WHY "INDIAN" SUMMER?

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

The origin of the term "Indian summer" has been variously explained. The traditional spell of mild, hazy weather in autumn is said to have been thus named because:

It was a favorite hunting season with the redskins.

It was a time propitious for their attacks on the whites, who were exempt from attack after winter had definitely set in.

It was the season for harvesting Indian corn.

The smokiness of the air was attributed to fires set by the Indians.

The smoke was said by the Indians to come from the pipe of their god Nanibozhu (or Manibozho, etc.).

The pleasant weather, liable to change without warning, was regarded as sharing the Indians' proverbial characteristics of treachery and deceitfulness.

When the early colonists thought that winter had come to stay, the Indians told them to expect a spell of mild weather, which, when it arrived, was accordingly called "the Indian summer."

Travelers saw in it some resemblance to the fine-weather season of British India and the Indian seas.

A Montreal correspondent, E.A. Fox, Esq., tells me that in Canadian schoolbooks of fifty years or more ago Indian summer was described as a provision of the beneficent Manitou for his constitutionally improvident copper-hued children, who had to be reminded to lay up supplies for the long winter. They were given a final warning by "squaw winter," which was followed by a period of fine weather, when all Indians, old and young, worked feverishly to gather food before the real winter began.

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