

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
November 23, 1933.

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 16, 1933

THE SANTA ANA

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A press dispatch dated November 13 stating that desert winds on that day sent the temperature up to 110 at Santa Ana, near Los Angeles, records one of the many exploits of a hot breeze that is notorious in southern California. The wind called the "Santa Ana," coming from the deserts of the interior, blows down the valley of the Santa Ana River, but it is not confined to that valley; much less to the town of Santa Ana, where the chamber of commerce once protested against the use of the name by official weathermen, as a libel on the town.

This wind, which often carries immense clouds of dust, blows with great violence through the mountain passes, such as Cajon and San Geronio Pass, but it also sweeps over the mountain ridges and its extreme heat and dryness are probably due in part to its strong downward movement; in other words, it is a "foehn" effect.

A man who lived for some years at Banning, near the mouth of the San Geronio Pass, wrote of the Santa Ana that it "causes people to lie on the floor like wilted cabbages. One can tell," he says, "that it is coming for hours ahead, so dry and hot is the air. At last it hits the house with a roar, and then follow days of miserable existence. The longest wind on record blew 29 days and nights, with only a quarter of a day intermission."

These winds do much damage both by their strength and by their dryness; they uproot trees, unroof houses, pierce windowpanes with gravel and ruin crops with their parching breath.

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