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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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TRAVELING WEATHER

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

Weather travels. Its travels are due mainly to the movements of systems of high and low barometric pressure -- "highs" and "lows" -- with their attendant winds and weather conditions. In temperate North America these systems travel in a general west to east direction; not usually due east, but nearly always from westerly to easterly longitudes.

The average speed at which the center of a low moves along its path varies from day to day and from season to season. A rough average for all seasons is 600 miles a day. Lows travel slowest in summer and fastest in winter, and they move faster, as a rule, in the northern states than in the southern. They are most frequent and most intense in winter. Highs travel, on an average, somewhat slower than lows, and are much more inclined than the latter to remain approximately stationary at times or move about aimlessly. The average paths of lows are much farther north in summer than in winter. From 30 to 40 per cent. of the lows that appear west of the 100th meridian do not survive long enough to cross the continent.

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21st and Constitution Ave.  
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