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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE "TULE" FOGS OF CALIFORNIA

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

The dense fogs that prevail on the coast of California in summer are formed at sea by the blowing of the wind over a belt of cold water near shore, and are brought inland by the afternoon sea breeze. The less frequent winter fogs of the same coast are formed over land and occur in all parts of the state. They are locally known as "tule" fogs, because they frequently originate over the marshes and overflowed lands where the tule, or bulrush, is the characteristic plant.

These fogs form at night when the air over the moist land is cooled by radiation. They persist until evaporated by the sun or carried away by winds. Though they are carried seaward they do not often go far from shore, and they are generally not more than 100 to 200 feet deep. For both reasons they are less dangerous to navigation than the broader and deeper fog belt of the summer months. A lookout at the masthead can often see over them and thus enable the vessel to keep the correct course.

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21st and Constitution Ave.  
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