

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed Nov. 23, 1934

ISOGRAMS

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On a daily weather map or on a climatic chart showing the distribution of average temperature over some part of the world you will see meandering curves that denote an equality of temperature at the places through which they are drawn. These curves are called "isothermal lines," or "isotherms." The first person to draw isotherms was Alexander von Humboldt, who published an "isothermal chart" of the globe in 1817.

The isotherm is one of a large family of curves used, in a similar way, in charts and diagrams to indicate the distribution of various physical conditions or values. These lines are known generically as "isograms". Meteorology employs a greater variety of them than any other branch of science. Here are some of the more important:

Isallobar. An isogram of the amount of change of barometric pressure in a specified time.

Isanemone. An isogram of wind velocity.

Isobar. An isogram of barometric pressure.

Isobront. An isogram connecting places at which a thunderstorm began or occurred at the same time.

Isohel. An isogram of the duration of sunshine.

Isohyet. An isogram of the amount of rainfall.

Isoneph. An isogram of cloudiness.

Meteorologists have given names to nearly a hundred of these lines, and new names are added to the list every year.

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