

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
June 18, 1935

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed June 11, 1935

DEATH-DEALING DUST STORMS

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

During a recent dust storm in southwestern Kansas -- and it was not one of the worst of these events -- the state health officer exposed an agar plate to the air for a bacterial count and found that the dust deposited about 900,000 bacteria per square foot per minute, as compared with a normal deposit in a clear atmosphere of about twelve lone bacteria. The Red Cross Courier, which records this episode, says that although these germs seemed to be practically all of the soil varieties, which so far as is known are harmless to man, the irritation caused by breathing dust-laden air without doubt gives the germs already in the nose and throat a chance to gain foothold, resulting in lung and respiratory diseases. Health statistics reveal a decided increase in the Kansas death rate during the first three months of the current year. Deaths from all causes were 10 per cent. more than in the same period of last year, while deaths from pneumonia and influenza each went up 30 per cent. Altogether, deaths from respiratory infections were 50 per cent. greater. Infant mortality and the spread of such diseases as measles showed an alarming gain. Besides this, twenty-one deaths in Kansas were definitely attributed by physicians to dust, three of them being actual cases of dust suffocation. Six deaths were reported from the same cause in the drought area of Colorado.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE
2101 Constitution Ave.
Washington, D.C.