A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
July 8, 1935

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed July 1, 1935

MODERN RAIN PRINTS

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

Geological collections contain many specimens of rain prints, or so-called fossil raindrops, that preserve the record of ancient rainstorms. The formation of such prints may often be witnessed today at places along the seashore, when a shower falls at low tide.

Here and there the sand or mud uncovered by the tide is just plastic enough — neither too wet nor too dry — to take the impression of the falling drops. Each drop forms a little pit, bordered by a shallow upraised rim. In calm weather, the drops fall vertically and make circular depressions. In windy weather, when the drops strike the ground obliquely, the depressions are elongated in the direction of the wind.

The prints thus made are usually obliterated by the incoming tide. If, however, dry sand is spread over them and a section of the beach is carefully cut out and baked in an oven, we can produce rain prints similar to those made ages ago by Nature.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

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