

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
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December 27, 1935

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 20, 1935

THE COLDEST DECEMBER

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Authority on Meteorology

The coldest December of recent times in the United States and Canada east of the Rockies was that of 1917. The severity of the weather during that month and the one following made an especially lasting impression because it added to the hardships and difficulties arising from the world war, then in progress; so much so that we may expect old people of the year 1970 or thereabouts to describe the winter of 1917-1918 as typical of the winters that prevailed in America in the days of their youth.

The cold weather was brought about mainly by a great anticyclone that overspread northern Alaska and vicinity early in the month and gradually extended eastward and southward into British America and the United States east of the Rocky Mountains as the month advanced. In Alaska the barometric pressure was far above normal, and the average temperature for the entire month at Eagle, near the Arctic Circle, was 46 degrees below zero; 23 degrees lower than the average for the previous coldest December on record. At Dawson the average for the month was 59 below zero; 29 degrees lower than the lowest mean ever before observed for December.

An interesting feature of the month's weather was that, while nearly the whole of Canada and the United States, east of the Continental Divide had average temperatures much below normal and records of low temperature for December were broken at a great number of places, the weather west of the Divide remained abnormally warm.

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