

For Release
May 5, 1938

By Major A. H. Thiessen
Science Service Meteorologist

The free air! This term has come into use in the present century when the properties of the upper air began to be vigorously studied. The "free air" has come to mean that portion of the atmosphere beyond the range of surface instruments. Observations of the upper or free air were first made by manned balloons as early as 1784. Later this method was superseded by free, unmanned balloons, either carrying instruments for measuring temperature, pressure, and humidity, or without instruments for noting the wind speed and direction at various altitudes. Kites carrying instruments were also used, but the use of kites is conditioned largely by the weather.
