

For Release
May 30, 1938

By Major A. H. Thiessen
Science Service Meteorologist

Rainbows! What do these brilliant arcs of color mean to savage tribes? A tribe in central Australia believes that the rainbow is the son of rain. It is his duty to keep his father (the rain) from falling. When rain is needed, the head rain-maker goes to the sacred store-house where he paints with red ochre three rainbows: on his body, on the ground, and on his shield. On the latter he also paints zigzag lines to imitate lightning. He then hides his shield until rain has fallen, when he destroys his drawings. All savage tribes, in their magic ceremonies, attribute success to the virtue of the rite; but if failure results, they say that someone has used a stronger magic to work the opposite effect.
