

For Release  
Feb. 7, 1939

By Major A. H. Thiessen  
Science Service Meteorologist

Frost Fairs! The river Thames, England, freezes over so seldom that in the old days when it did people made a gala time of it. Such a year was 1739-40, and there is extant a steel engraving showing a fair held on the ice at that time. Tents and booths were erected where food and liquors were sold; a printing press was set up to print souvenirs of the occasion, and many engaged in ice sports. These attractions caused many to flock to the banks to witness so curious a scene. The cold that year began about Christmas time and lasted nearly two months. There was much distress, food was given to the poor, and coal and even water were scarce. Carpenters and bricklayers, with their tools draped in mourning, marched through the streets begging relief.

-----