



7-15-1987

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Recommended Citation

Tales, Maxine Weather (1987) "Laughable Weather Tales," *Westview*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 4 , Article 9.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol6/iss4/9>

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Laughable Weather Tales

By Maxine Wilhelm

One day a couple drove in to our Honey Farm near Erick. The wind was blowing about normal. The young woman took a deep breath and said, "You sure have a lot of air here!" I started laughing, and she explained that they were from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and because of the refineries the air was always polluted there.

Many people comment on the weather; it's a natural way to start a conversation, and I catch myself doing the same.

Some people ask, "Why are the trees along the highway leaning to the north?" I bite my tongue to keep from answering, "They're leaning off the highway, too." But I patiently explain about the south wind.

"Does the wind blow like this all the time?" "No", I answer; "sometimes it blows harder." Then I think about the tale that has been repeated for so many years.

The wind was blowing and storm clouds were rolling across the sky when a tourist stopped at a farm house. He jumped out of the car and asked the farmer, "How do you know when to go to the cellar?"

The farmer pointed to a log chain tied to the top of the fence post in the yard.

"See that chain? When the wind blows hard enough to straighten the chain straight out from the top of the post, it's time to start thinking about going."

"When the wind starts snapping the links off, it's time to go!"

We laugh at our weather jokes because we know we can't do anything about the weather; besides, if we don't like it, there'll probably be a change tomorrow anyway.

During a sandstorm, people have asked, "Was it like this during the Dustbowl Days?" Local housewives after a sandstorm say, "I've got to shovel the dirt out of my house today."

One man from the East Coast asked us during a very hot, dry summer, "Is this where the desert starts?"

Sometimes it's so dry when the mud swallows return in the spring, my husband, Olin, has to make mud so they can build their nests. This is really true!

Being farmers, we sometimes don't realize how much we talk about the weather. Conversations begin with, "Do you think it's ever going to rain?" The logical answer is "Of course; it always does."

My father, George Martin, used to say, "I've plowed, planted, and done all I can; now it's up to the good Lord to send us rain if he wants us to make a crop." My first memory of prayer as a child was praying for rain because Daddy told us to.

Have you heard "it's hotter than Hades today" or "You can fry an egg on the sidewalk in this heat" or "It's so hot that spit dries before it hits the ground"? These are all a part of laughable weather tales.

Maxine Wilhelm of Erick is becoming one of our regulars. In addition to writing articles such as "Laughable Weather Tales," she has also published a recipe storybook of the depression era titled SMIDGEN OF HONEY. More information may be obtained from Mrs. Wilhelm by writing to her at Route 1, Box 80 in Erick (73645). ❧

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