

## CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA FOR JULY, 1912.

## DISTRICT No. 10, GREAT BASIN.

ALFRED H. THIESSEN, District Editor.

## GENERAL SUMMARY.

July was a remarkably cool month in all parts of the district. Frosts occurred in the mountain districts of Utah, doing some damage to crops. In the Utah area the temperature for the month averaged lower than that of any previous July of record, except 1902. The precipitation averaged above normal. There was an unusual number of heavy thunderstorms, which caused some loss of life and property damage.

The average number of rainy days was 6, clear days 14, partly cloudy days 9, and cloudy days 8.

## TEMPERATURE.

The temperature for the month averaged  $67.6^{\circ}$  for the district as a whole, or  $3.8^{\circ}$  below normal. The highest local means occurred at the lower stations west of the Wasatch Mountains, and the lowest in the Wyoming area and at the elevated stations in the Utah and California areas.

The local mean temperatures ranged from  $80.2^{\circ}$  at Lemay, Utah, to  $54.1^{\circ}$  at Truckee, Cal. Of those stations having records of 10 years or more, only three reported monthly mean temperatures above normal; the remainder were below normal. The greatest minus departure was  $12.6^{\circ}$  at Beowawe, Nev.

The month began moderately cool, and the lowest temperatures were generally recorded from the 1st to the 5th. After the 5th warmer weather set in, but at no time during the month were the afternoon temperatures unusually high. The highest temperatures occurred about the 17th as a rule.

The following were the highest temperatures that occurred in the various areas of the several States of this district:  $88^{\circ}$  at Cokeville, Wyo., on the 25th and at Border, Wyo., on the 24th and other dates;  $93^{\circ}$  at Weston, Idaho, on the 28th;  $104^{\circ}$  at Low, Utah, on the 17th;  $95^{\circ}$  at Silver Lake, Oreg., on the 16th;  $92^{\circ}$  at Truckee, Cal., on the 16th; and  $106^{\circ}$  at Carlin, Nev., on the 11th and other dates.

Freezing temperatures occurred in nearly every State having areas in this district. The lowest temperature for the district was  $25^{\circ}$  at Geyser, Nev., on the 4th. In the other States the following low temperatures were registered:  $31^{\circ}$  at Cokeville, Wyo., on the 5th;  $34^{\circ}$  at Paris, Idaho, on the 11th;  $30^{\circ}$  at Pinto, Utah, on the 4th and 5th and at Woodruff, Utah, on the 16th and 24th;  $28^{\circ}$  at Cliff, Oreg., on the 3d; and  $26^{\circ}$  at both Truckee and Tahoe, Cal., on the 1st.

## PRECIPITATION.

The precipitation for the district averaged 0.98 inch, which is 0.55 inch above the normal. As is usual in summer, the distribution of moisture was quite uneven, although good amounts fell in most places. The largest amounts, as a rule, fell in the northeastern portion of the district, while at Truckee, Cal., no rain fell. The largest amount recorded was 3.53 inches at Randolph, Utah, concerning which the observer at that place wrote:

The greatest rainfall ever recorded at Randolph fell during the storm of July 31 and August 1, when over 3 inches was measured, 2.26 inches of which fell on the last day of July. I have never seen its equal and I have been in the mountains for 40 years. The storm did a great deal of damage to crops, roads, and ditches. The thunder and lightning were very heavy, burning out telephones and damaging the lines.

Of those stations having records of more than 10 years, most of them reported amounts above the normal. The month was remarkable not only for the excessive amounts recorded, breaking all previous records, but the rates of rainfall exceeded that of most former years in many places.

Precipitation was well distributed throughout the month. In all States having areas in this district, except Oregon and California, the rain fell in four quite distinct periods: 1st-4th, 11th-14th, 17th-21st, and 25th-31st. The heaviest rains fell during the last two periods, and were so very unusual that short accounts are given below.

## STORM OF JULY 19, 1912, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

The heaviest July rain on record at Salt Lake City fell on July 19, when a total of 1.10 inches was measured, which is not only the largest 24-hour amount, but is also larger than any monthly amount for July on record since 1874 with the exception of four years.

This storm, like most summer showers, was local in its intensity, heavy rain having been reported not farther than 20 miles away from the city. The weather chart of the morning of the 19th showed a storm area lying over the northern Rocky Mountain region, but exhibiting no particular intensity. The barometer began to rise quite suddenly at 10 a. m., when the storm broke, but the rise was less than one-tenth inch. The temperature fell from  $72^{\circ}$  to about  $60^{\circ}$  during the same time.

This storm caused no serious damage, although the street-car traffic was discontinued for a few hours on one line owing to the large quantity of sand washed on the track. Damage was done to lawns by the flood water

washing sand and débris over them in some parts of the city, and a few cellars were flooded.

#### STORM AT MAZUMA, NEV.

By H. F. ALPS, Section Director.

One of the most disastrous floods ever known in Nevada occurred in the Seven Troughs and Mazuma mining districts about 5 p. m., July 18, washing away all the frail buildings at Mazuma and killing nine persons, as well as seriously injuring several others. Water to a depth of 15 to 20 feet rushed down the canyon upon the mining camp at Mazuma without warning, and carried the wreckage of frame buildings to the flat below, a distance of over a mile.

The canyon is wide at Seven Troughs, and damage there was confined to the loss of a few buildings in the business portion. The water struck the cyanide plant of the Coalition Mining Co. and destroyed the building, taking the large concrete vault down the canyon and breaking it into fragments.

Mazuma is about 2 miles below Seven Troughs in a narrow canyon with precipitous sides. Here the flood waters left only a hotel and a store.

The flood came without warning, as it was not raining at the camps at the time, although a light sprinkle had fallen a few minutes before. The basin in the mountains where the heavy precipitation occurred covers an area of about 4 square miles. The heavy downpour was seen by two mining engineers who were observing the thunderstorm from the Coalition office at Seven Troughs. When the danger of the flood was realized, they endeavored to notify Mazuma, but the wires had been put out of service by lightning. Had it been possible to give warning of the flood a few minutes before it reached Mazuma there would have been no loss of life, as a climb of a few rods up the sides of the canyon would have been sufficient to place the people above the crest of the water. Three small canyons unite with the Seven Troughs canyon, and when heavy thunderstorms occur in the catch-basins of these canyons, the conditions are very favorable for floods at Mazuma where the canyon is narrow.

#### RECENT STORMS AT MURRAY, UTAH.

By R. C. TOWLER.

The rains at Murray, Utah, during the latter part of July were unusually heavy for this month. Early in July but little rain fell, but from July 18 until the close of the month storms were frequent and heavy.

Rain on July 19 was especially heavy between the hours of 10 a. m. and noon, followed by a more steady fall until 3 p. m., amounting to something over 1 inch.

On July 28 another heavy storm occurred between 4 and 6 p. m., and still another on the evening of July 31, accompanied by considerable thunder and lightning.

The effect of the storms in general was good for beets, corn, tomatoes, alfalfa, potatoes, and orchards. Some damage was done, however, in the lower bottoms, to grain fields, many of which, ready for harvest, were laid flat. The rains in the nearby canyons was heavy and the flow of the streams from them was thereby strengthened, so that the farmers in this vicinity are fearing no shortage of water for irrigation during the rest of the season.

#### THE RELATION BETWEEN LIGHT PRECIPITATION AND "ALKALI."

By R. A. HART, United States Drainage Engineer.

The baneful effects of so-called "alkali" upon agriculture and horticulture in the arid section of the United States have become so widespread and intense as to present a serious problem in the future development of the West. Confined at first to recognized deserts, or to minor spots which occasioned indifferent wonder, rather than real interest, accumulation of alkaline salts are now becoming so general throughout the irrigated valleys as to cause alarm which is, indeed, well founded.

It is a fact that wherever irrigation has been practiced for any considerable length of time, lands formerly highly productive are now showing injury to a greater or less extent. In some instances there is merely a decrease in the general crop returns, or yields are spotted, with portions of a given tract producing as well as ever, while other portions are practically barren; but in many instances whole farms and series of farms have become unproductive and have been abandoned. Broadly speaking, there is not a valley in the West in which the injury has not been felt, and in some of these a large portion of the lands formerly cultivated are now idle or used only for wild pasture. In nearly every case, the accumulation of an excess of alkaline salts in the surface soil played an important part in the destruction. The fact that such salts were responsible for the injury wrought has nearly always been recognized by agriculturists, but they have rarely stopped to consider why this should be so, or what means might be taken to prevent injury, or to reclaim injured lands. As a result abandonment took place and new tracts were put under cultivation. This method served while there was an abundance of raw land to be had, although the cost of taking up new land was often higher than the reclamation of the old would have been, but these new lands were, in turn, subject to the same difficulty, so that now, with the opportunity for expansion practically gone, it is necessary that the second reclamation of the desert be effected, and such work in that direction is now being prosecuted. Were such reclamation not possible, permanent agriculture in a major portion of the irrigated region would be out of the question, so that this work becomes an important factor in the advancement of that region.

Water plays an important rôle in the transformation which has been noted, and it is interesting to make a study of its connection, both as rainfall and as irrigation water. It seems to be the popular notion that the alkaline salts are inherently associated only with arid soils, but this is a misconception. As a matter of fact alkaline salts are products of rock materials which, in the early stages of the earth's history, were rather uniformly distributed throughout the crust. The disassociation of the rock material was brought about by the action of heat, cold, ice, water, air, wind, vegetation, and numerous gases and solutions, and the alkaline salts were liberated. Being soluble in water they were readily transported about by its movement with the result that, as time wore on, soils in regions of heavy rainfall were washed almost free by a leaching action, and the salts found their way to the sea, rendering it saline. In the arid section, on the other hand, although the elements were active in disassociating the rock material, there was



TABLE 1.—Climatological data for July, 1912. District No. 10—Continued.

Stations.	Counties.	Elevation, feet.	Length of record, years.	Temperature, in degrees Fahrenheit.							Precipitation, in inches.					Sky.				Prevailing wind direction.	Observers.
				Mean.	Departure from the normal.	Highest.	Date.	Lowest.	Date.	Greatest daily range.	Total.	Departure from the normal.	Greatest in 24 hours.	Total snowfall, unmelted.	Number of rainy days, 0.01 inch or more.	Number of clear days.	Number of partly cloudy days.	Number of cloudy days.			
<i>Utah—Continued.</i>																					
Wendover	Tooele	.....	1	73.3	.....	100	17	49	2	45	0.53	.....	0.50	0	3	11	17	3	se.	J. S. Cooper.	
Whisky Creek	Millard	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	0.40	0	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	Geo. Stevens.	
Woodruff	Rich	6,500	10	56.2	- 4.6	86	25	30	16†	54	3.13	+ 2.69	1.43	0	8	11	14	6	.....	A. L. Eastman.	
<i>Oregon.</i>																					
Burns	Harney	4,157	20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	J. C. Welcome, jr.	
Cliff	Lake	4,300	4	58.5	.....	94	16†	28	3	57	0.59	.....	0.33	0	4	17	6	8	nw.	John C. Green.	
Paisley	do.	4,500	8	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	E. C. Woodward.	
Silver Lake	do.	4,700	14	61.6	- 3.0	95	16	31	1	54	0.76	+ 0.26	0.21	0	6	18	10	3	n.	L. W. Charles.	
<i>California.</i>																					
Tahoe	Placer	6,240	2	56.6	.....	86	16	26	1	47	1.30	.....	0.80	0	2	19	11	1	w.	R. M. Watson.	
Truckee	Nevada	5,819	41	54.1	-11.3	92	16	26	1	50	0.00	- 0.16	0.00	0	0	29	0	2	sw.	Southern Pacific Co.	
<i>Nevada.</i>																					
Battle Mountain	Lander	4,843	41	68.5	- 6.7	102	18†	38	2†	58	0.15	+ 0.03	0.15	0	1	20	6	5	w.	Southern Pacific Co.	
Beowawe	do.	4,905	41	64.6	-12.6	102	16	31	8†	60	.....	.....	.....	0	.....	19	1	11	w.	Do.	
Carlin	Elko	5,232	41	72.0 <sup>c</sup>	+ 1.4	106 <sup>e</sup>	11†	30 <sup>e</sup>	7	63 <sup>c</sup>	.....	.....	.....	0	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Do.	
Carson Dam	Churchill	4,032	5	70.8	.....	95	16	42	4	39	0.27	.....	0.27	0	1	17	7	7	w.	U. S. Reclamation Service.	
Cherry Creek	White Pine	6,450	4	67.1	.....	91	10†	36	4	42	1.16	.....	0.52	0	9	13	14	4	w.	J. H. Leishman.	
Clover Valley	Elko	6,000	11	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	I. F. Wiseman.	
Columbia	Esmeralda	5,750	5	69.8	.....	96	16	40	4	40	0.39	.....	0.19	0	6	18	8	5	se.	A. Booth.	
Dry Farm	Elko	5,600	0	66.4	.....	92	16	38	1†	51	1.39	.....	1.20	0	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	Walfrid Sohlman.	
Eiko	do.	5,432	41	64.9	- 6.0	95	28	35	4	51	1.25	+ 0.99	0.41	0	10	15	4	12	w.	E. J. Clark.	
Ely	White Pine	6,421	21	66.6	- 0.4	90	10	37	4†	43	0.72	+ 0.19	0.20	0	8	.....	.....	.....	.....	R. E. Middagh.	
Eureka	do.	6,500	9	66.0	.....	90	9†	34	1†	48	3.58	.....	0.81	0	9	14	4	13	s.	Clay Simms.	
Fallon	Churchill	3,965	7	69.9	.....	100	16	38	1	46	0.13	.....	0.08	0	4	23	3	5	w.	U. S. Experiment Station.	
Fernley	Lyon	4,200	39	72.0	- 5.9	100	16	35	1	48	0.81	+ 0.59	0.33	0	5	18	11	2	w.	Mrs. G. A. Steele.	
Gardnerville	Douglas	4,530	12	61.1 <sup>b</sup>	- 7.0	87	27	32	1	41	0.38	+ 0.27	0.22	0	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	W. M. Maule.	
Geyser	Lincoln	.....	8	59.3	.....	98	28	25	4	09	0.21	.....	.....	0	5	5	22	4	s.	Mrs. J. F. Wambolt.	
Golconda	Humboldt	4,697	33	70.2	- 6.1	95	17†	39	1	44	0.08	+ 0.02	0.08	0	1	12	11	8	w.	Southern Pacific Co.	
Halleck	Elko	5,631	19	64.2	- 5.5	98	17	30	3	59	1.10	+ 0.89	1.00	0	2	23	4	4	.....	Do.	
Hawthorne	Mineral	4,569	18	72.9	- 1.7	98	16	44	1†	41	0.23	+ 0.08	0.14	0	3	18	11	2	sw.	G. B. Stannard.	
Jean	Clark	2,074	4	76.2	.....	105	10	46	6	53	0.46	.....	0.15	0	4	22	7	2	nw.	Salt Lake Route.	
Lahontan	Churchill	.....	0	75.5	.....	100	16	48	2†	36	0.27	.....	0.20	0	4	18	12	1	w.	U. S. Reclamation Service.	
Lewers Ranch	Washoe	5,500	24	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Ross Lewers.	
Lovelocks	Humboldt	3,977	18	68.9	- 7.6	100	16	36	1†	49	0.36	+ 0.26	0.23	0	3	16	9	6	s.	A. P. Tilford.	
McDermitt	do.	4,700	23	67.5	- 6.2	95	28	34	1	41	0.15	- 0.09	0.07	0	3	15	8	8	w.	Scott Sterling.	
Millett	Nye	.....	4	67.0 <sup>d</sup>	.....	93 <sup>d</sup>	16	40 <sup>d</sup>	5†	49 <sup>d</sup>	0.88	.....	0.37	0	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	Fred J. Jones.	
Mina	Mineral	4,600	5	74.1	.....	103	16	44	4	46	T.	.....	T.	0	0	23	0	8	.....	Southern Pacific Co.	
Potts	Nye	6,990	19	62.4	- 8.2	93	27	31	3	52	0.85	+ 0.26	0.30	0	5	10	2	19	s.	Miss Mamie Potts.	
Quinn River Ranch	Humboldt	4,550	10	67.4 <sup>d</sup>	- 1.6	100 <sup>d</sup>	28	31 <sup>d</sup>	4	60 <sup>d</sup>	0.05	- 0.13	0.05	0	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	F. M. Payne.	
Rebel Creek	do.	.....	0	67.3	.....	99	28	32	1	54	0.54	.....	0.30	0	3	16	7	8	sw.	E. J. Hyatt.	
Reno	Washoe	4,532	41	67.8	+ 0.3	97	16	35	1	42	0.58	+ 0.44	0.48	0	4	20	8	3	w.	U. S. Weather Bureau.	
Soda Lake	Churchill	4,534	5	71.8	.....	98	28	39	1	40	0.25	.....	0.19	0	2	17	8	6	w.	U. S. Reclamation Service.	
Tecoma	Elko	4,812	34	65.4	- 8.8	103	29	28	2†	63	0.25	+ 0.07	0.25	0	3	10	10	11	se.	Southern Pacific Co.	
Tonopah	Nye	6,090	7	69.2	.....	91	16	41	3	30	1.34	.....	0.51	0	5	14	10	7	w.	U. S. Weather Bureau.	
Wells	Elko	5,631	40	69.4	- 1.7	97	17	30	16	65	1.26	+ 0.88	0.90	0	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	Southern Pacific Co.	
Winnemucca	Humboldt	4,432	33	69.0	- 2.6	97	28	37	4	50	0.52	+ 0.35	0.35	0	4	19	4	8	sw.	U. S. Weather Bureau.	

a, b, c, etc., indicate respectively 1, 2, 3, etc., days missing from the record.  
 \*\* Temperature extremes are from observed readings of the dry bulb; means are computed from observed readings.  
 † Also on other dates.  
 T. Precipitation is less than 0.01 inch rain or melted snow.





