Optimum Indiana Weather Elsewhere

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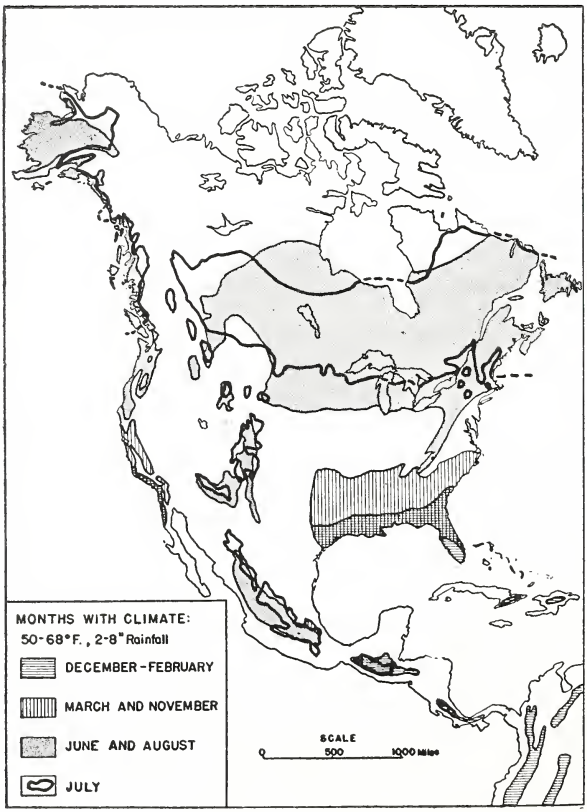
During World War II our army was called upon to operate under a great variety of climatic conditions and ignorance of overseas climatic conditions often resulted in the assignment of unsuitable equipment to many units. Subsequently the Office of the Quartermaster General established a Climatology Unit which prepared maps showing climatic conditions month by month for each continent. These climatic zone maps have been used by the armed forces and by a few geographers but few business applications have been reported. Here it is suggested that broader civilian use of these maps is feasible and their application to the tourist business is offered as an example.

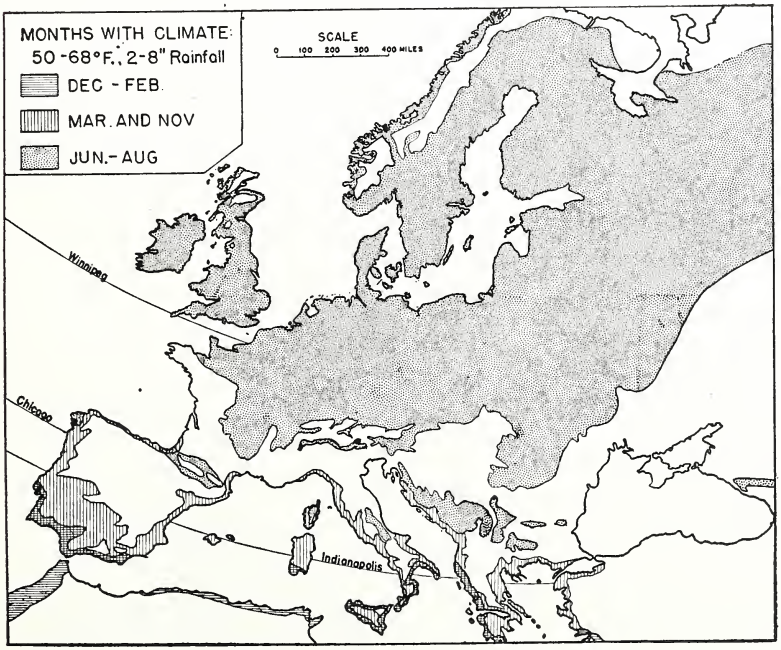
In this hypothetical case let us assume that a Hoosier tourist is anxious to spend a vacation in weather comparable to the best Indiana has to offer. Our tourist, like most of us, prefers the common Indiana



weather of April and May and its autumn counterpart in September and October. At such seasons a medium-weight wool suit, supplemented at most by a topcoat, provides comfortable attire. Statistically such weather occurs with monthly averages between 50° and 68°F. and in Indiana is accompanied by from 2 to 8 inches of rain per month. The climatic zone maps classify such a climate as *mild* and *humid*.

The climatic zone maps make it easy to discover where this, or any other climate, can be experienced each month of the year. The accompanying figures generalize some of this data to show the possibilities open to our hypothetical Hoosier tourist in North America and Europe. Note that these maps do not show where exact duplicates of ideal Hoosier weather may be found: differences in winds, thunderstorms, diurnal fluctuations and the like are disregarded. But the maps do show where clothing and other equipment suitable to Indiana spring and fall weather would be appropriate.

The map for North America (figure 1) offers only a few surprises. Thus the optimum weather occurs in the central American highlands in winter and summer but on the Mexican plateau only in summer. Some of the lands commonly visited by winter tourists fail to meet our tourist's criteria; thus Mexico and much of the American Southwest are too dry and the Caribbean lowlands are too hot. In June and August extensive areas in our country are classified as mild but in July a visit to Canada or a few mountain areas is necessary to avoid the heat and to approximate Indiana's late spring.



The Europe map (figure 2) shows that only narrow areas around the Mediterranean have mild humid weather in winter. Even the presence of these areas is noteworthy when it is observed that the parallel of Indianapolis extends through the center of the western Mediterranean Basin. In summer most of Europe has ideal weather from June to August and this weather is so equable that it is unnecessary to differentiate July from June and August as in North America. The relative freedom of western Europe from extreme heat is explained by its latitudes which are similar to those of Canada.

With the basic climatic zone data, other maps to fit other requirements could easily be constructed. Maps showing the distribution of dry, mild climates would be of value to those suffering from sinus. Maps showing the distribution of warm, dry climates would be of interest to those suffering from colds and rheumatism. By applying this climatic data in such ways, geographic patterns take on practical significance and change from mere academic wisdom to aids in the planning of human activities.

Soil Conservation in Action

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One of the most serious problems confronting the nation is that of soil erosion. During the past decade it is heartening to learn that farmers and other individuals are awakening rapidly to the growing menace of soil losses. In most parts of our country steps are being taken to counteract the erosion evil. Farmers, with the aid of local, state, and federal agencies are putting into operation means by which soil conservation will succeed.

The first step in establishing any soil conservation program is that of interesting the farmer in the plan and proving to him the economic validity of soil conservation practices. This first hurdle is best crossed by the actual demonstration of soil conservation procedures and the results obtained by careful farm planning.

Among the problems that need most to be demonstrated are those of water, soil and crop management.

This paper is a report of a soil saving demonstration which was held on a Vigo County, Indiana farm last September.* The farm is 160 acres in size and the physical characteristics are typical of upland farms in that part of Vigo County. The topography is rolling with slopes ranging from two to fifteen per cent. However, at least three-fourths of the farm has a slope below five per cent. The soil is silt loam, with a light grey topsoil, fine textured and medium acid in reaction. As shown in table 1, the cultivated soil has an average p.H. of 6.5, which is quite near the normal p.H. of 7. The present p.H. in the tilled fields is the result of applications of lime during the past five years.

* The farm is owned by Dr. H. M. Bratt, of Terre Haute, and is the first farm east of Riley, Indiana on the south side of State Road No. 46.