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Review of *The Thunderstorm in Human Affairs* Edited by Edwin Kessler

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The Thunderstorm in Human Affairs. Edited by Edwin Kessler. 2d ed., revised and enlarged. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1983. Illustrations, maps, charts, graphs, tables, references, index. xiii + 186 pp. \$24.95.

This magnificent book is copiously endowed with figures and photographs, with generous pages of eight and one-half by eleven inches. The book is organized and written in such a way that the interested layperson, the meteorology student, and the thunderstorm researcher will all benefit from it. The list of authors reads like an American "Who's Who" of specialists in the field of thunderstorms.

The book is a project of the National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, Oklahoma, and it has much to interest residents of the Great Plains although its geographic scope encompasses the entire United States. Kessler has produced a judicious mixture of the overview and the case study, so that no one region of the country is overemphasized and all aspects of the thunderstorm receive some consideration. With flash floods, tornadoes, and lightning receiving separate chapters, though, I was surprised that hail was not accorded the same treatment.

The scene is set in chapter 1 with a review of American "Thunderstorms in a Social Context," which discusses benefits, costs, and choices in human response. Chapters 2 and 3 are fascinating case studies of the infamous Big Thompson Canyon flash flood of 1976 and the devastating Midwest-Appalachia tornado outbreak of 3-4 April 1974. Chapters 4 through 7 are more general. They deal with the impact of thunderstorms on agriculture and forestry, the effects of wind on buildings, lightning damage and protection, and thunderstorms and

aviation. The two concluding chapters provide overviews of prediction, warning, and disaster-preparedness for severe thunderstorms in the United States; and of U.S. thunderstorm research.

The overall high quality of the book is maintained through a substantial list of important references on American thunderstorms. The book appears to be free of significant errors—as it should be, for its nineteen writers are all authorities in their fields. A few of the photographs lack clarity, and chapter 4, while interesting, displays the uneven character sometimes inherent in multiple authorship. All in all, at \$24.95, *The Thunderstorm in Human Affairs* is almost a steal.

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