

# World Survey of Climatology, Volume 2: Climates of North America

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Semantics is ill-served by an author who thinks that generic means genetic. Similar assaults are made on words throughout the book: Dr. Frye seems unaware that he uses the term system in two different ways on page 215, that variance (p.2) is not the same as variant, or that paragenesis (in the appendix) is not equivalent to occurrence. And what is a "miniscus"?

According to the dust-jacket, one of the book's strong points is that it contains "more than 150 carefully prepared and selected drawings". It would be very easy to prove careless preparation and bad selection in many cases, but let four suffice. 'Silic' appears for 'silica' in figure 7.3 and the field labelled 'solid' in figure 7.5b should be labelled 'two solids'. Figure 6.14 taken from Tuttle and Bowen is a bad choice because it is based on the misconception that there is a continuous spectrum of compositions between haplogranitic melts and the aqueous fluids with which they are in equilibrium. Figure 7.7, Bowen's two reaction series, is a bad choice in its unaltered form, because it perpetuates the jumble of potash feldspar, muscovite and quartz at the low temperature end. A *modern* mineralogy should not do that.

The text is not without a few flashes of humour. We are told that hexagonal closest packing should be familiar "even to those that have never racked up billiard balls". Elsewhere we are exhorted to build a sand castle and compare it with a similar structure of aluminum filings. Yet again, the author hints at a miss-spent youth when on p. 210 he comments on the mixing of alcohol and gasoline. I kept reading in the hope that somewhere I'd find the recipe for a mint julep.

I don't recommend the book for any purpose.

MS received, September 30, 1974.

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## **World Survey of Climatology, Volume 2, Climates of North America**

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*Edited by R. A. Bryson and F. K. Hare  
Elsevier Scientific Publishing  
Company, 420 p., 1974.  
\$49.50.*

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This large volume, edited by Bryson and Hare, is one of a fifteen-volume series entitled *World Survey of Climatology* (H. E. Landsberg, editor-in-chief). Six contributors are involved in the four lengthy chapters which endeavour to discuss the climates of the continent from Alaska to Mexico, based on data for 1931-1960. In Chapter 1, the *Climates of North America*, Bryson and Hare present a lucid account of the controls of the continent's climates, the climatic and mean circulation patterns and more briefly, past climates dating from the early Holocene. *The Climate of Canada and Alaska* is presented in Chapter 2 by Hare and Hay. In addition to the commonplace parameters discussed in most regional climatology they have boldly introduced concepts and parameters from the energy and moisture balances which have been rarely treated outside of the work of the USSR school of climatologists. In addition, an appendix by Baier discusses the successful crop water balance model for Canada developed by the Canadian Department of Agriculture. Court treats the *Climate of the Conterminous United States* in Chapter 3 from the viewpoint of the controlling air masses, moisture, precipitation, storms, evaporation, heat, climate types and some statistical relations which include such singularities as the January thaw. *The Climate of Mexico*, handled in Chapter 4 by Alemán and Garcia, emphasize the role of complex surface topography and dynamic aspects of the atmosphere in determining temperature and precipitation regimes.

Much of the text is given over to lengthy sets of climatic tables (130 pages) and copious illustrations (about 140 pages) with a surprisingly limited written text of 148 pages. Hence it shows some of the characteristics of a climatic atlas and a computer dump of data. The specialist can gain much from these and from the excellent reference lists. The non-specialist may find himself bogged down in detail he doesn't want and have difficulty in relating the four parts since themes and approaches are not common. The book is handsomely produced but the price ensures that the specialist and non-specialist will only consult it in libraries.

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