



A History of the Thermometer and Its Uses in Meteorology

By W. E. Knowles Middleton

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This history of the thermometer includes controversy about its invention, the story of different scales, Fahrenheit and centigrade, and the history of the gradual scientific then popular understanding of the concept of temperature. Not until 1800 did people interested in thermometers begin to see clearly what they were measuring, and the impetus for improving thermometry came largely from study of the weather?the liquid-in-glass thermometer became the meteorologist's instrument before that of the chemist or physicist. This excellent introductory study follows the development of indicating and recording thermometers until recent times, emphasizing meteorological applications.

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Review

"Many people will welcome and accept the verdicts of the foremost modern historian of meteorological instruments... His research sheds new light on many old arguments, and some conclusions differ so much from classic accounts that countless textbooks and reference works may need revision."

(Science)

"This book traces in detail the invention and evolution of the thermometer... Fully documented, well written, and handsomely designed and illustrated... The book will be of interest to laymen and is a standard reference work for historians of science."

(Library Journal)

About the Author

W. E. Knowles Middleton (1902–88) wrote 15 books and 75 to 100 scientific papers related to the science of weather instruments and meteorological optics as well as their history. His major contribution was the book *Meteorological Instruments*, first published in 1953. From 1929–46, he worked for the Meteorological Service of Canada, specializing in measurement and instrumentation. After retiring, he was a professor emeritus and honorary lecturer associated with the Department of History of Medicine and Science at the University of British Columbia.

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