

JOURNAL OF WEATHER MODIFICATION
IS DEDICATED TO

MARION NELSON BRUCE
- a true American Pioneer -
January 31, 1899 - February 12, 1975

THE RAINMAKERS

To the guardians of the sky,
For the ones who ask why.

Some people like you help mankind,
Others scoff of every new find.

Keep doing the best you can
Of helping your fellow-man.

For some believe and others won't
Thunderbird laughs at those who don't.

Marianne Bruce Miller

MARION NELSON BRUCE

Marion Bruce was born on January 31, 1899 at Winterset, Iowa to Richard and Bertha Bruce. He passed away on February 12, 1975 at the University of Minnesota Hospital and was laid to rest at the Black Hills National Cemetery near Struggess, South Dakota.

Marion moved with his family to Wall, South Dakota, in 1904, attended school there and in Rapid City, then graduated from South Dakota State College in 1921. He married Alvera Peterson on December 5, 1925 at Custer. They made their home in Scenic, and in 1933 Marion took a position with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, serving for 13 years. In 1945, the Bruce family moved to McIntosh, South Dakota.

In the years which followed, Marion was not one to remain an inactive part of the community. Already an Army veteran of WWI and WWII, he became a member of the Order of Eastern Star, Masonic Bodies, the American Legion Post, and a Member of the State Historical Society. Other interests included sponsorship of the Water Floridation Program which he organized and followed through the South Dakota State Legislature until its final passage.

But Marion's real interest and pioneering thrust came in the field of weather modification. We can remember when he started his own "rainmaking" experiments by soaking briquets in silver iodide and burning them in his cook stove, then going outside to observe clouds for possible effects. The silver iodide soaked corn cob was another of Marion's innovations. We also remember Marion speaking in meeting rooms throughout the country trying to get people interested in weather modification. Beginning in 1950, he visited laboratories, spoke with scientists, examined the experiments of others, and did a few of his own. He was a true student of the field.

Above all, Marion wrote letters; lots of them! He wrote them to everyone!! These classic letters contained the seeds of weather modification concepts which have been put to practice in years gone by and will continue to influence programs of the future. The thoughts of Marion, along with his pestering, perseverance and strong persuasiveness, did much to move weather modification research along the road to an active applied science.

Today, the technology of increasing rainfall and decreasing hail damage by weather modification techniques has moved to such a level of respectability that federal, state and local governments all over the world are funding research and operational programs. Many scientific uncertainties remain, but the day that precipitation management will become a fully accepted technology by scientists and lay persons alike, has been considerably hastened by the thoughts and deeds of Marion Nelson Bruce.