

IT'S NOT ALWAYS WARM IN OKLAHOMA

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When Oklahomans hear about a low temperature of -27 degrees Fahrenheit, they probably don't pay much attention, or say a "tsk tsk" for those poor souls up North. Many of those same people might be shocked upon hearing that not only has that low temperature appeared in Oklahoma, it's happened twice. The first occurrence was a couple of years before statehood on February 13, 1905, in the far northeastern town of Vinita. The 18th of January marks the anniversary of the second occurrence, however, at the small Adair County town of Watts in 1930.

The -27 degrees at Vinita was amidst 21 consecutive days with snowfall on the ground, and was accompanied by a reading of -15 degrees a couple of days later. Snow was also present at Watts, and the record low was followed a few days later by low temperatures of -15 and -26 degrees. In contrast, the lowest temperature recorded by the Oklahoma Mesonet this winter thus far, -15 degrees at Kenton on December 8, would only tie for the third-lowest that month at Watts.

Oklahoma's record low temperature still pales to those of other states. Colorado and Montana have record lows of -61 and -70 degrees, respectively. The lowest temperature ever recorded in the U.S. is -80 degrees, which occurred at Prospect Creek Camp in the Endicott Mountains of northern Alaska on Jan. 23, 1971. The record low temperature for North America remains the -81 degrees observed in Canada's Yukon Territory in 1941, while the record for the Northern Hemisphere is a -90 degree reading in Siberia.

Oklahoma's record high temperature is 120 degrees, observed six times, the last of which occurred at the Tipton Mesonet site on June 27, 1994.

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