

“ I grew up near Texas A&M, and the A&M radar spotted the tornadic storm's 'hook echo.' You might say that the "hook echo" hooked me on meteorology.

In that era, before the centralization of operations, meteorology consisted of four basic steps: taking observations, plotting observations on maps, analyzing maps, and making forecasts based on the maps. My

first job in meteorology was as a map plotter, which was perhaps the most unrecognized yet crucial job. I read the observational data off teletype reports from over North America and plotted the data on weather maps, so that the observations for each weather station were clearly represented on real-time maps for the synoptic meteorology classes at Texas A&M. The classes were aimed at teaching students how to draw the analysis lines to fit a set of current observations and thus produce a map showing the current weather over the U.S.

In the 1960s this form of meteorology began to be replaced by new technologies of fax transmission. So my interest in the important role of the now extinct map plotters arises from the fact that I was one! ”

—Robert A. Houze, Jr., *University of Washington*. See “*Weather and Cloud Symbols: The Heritage of Hand-Plotted Weather Maps.*”

