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COVER

Tier of smooth skirt clouds rims eruption column (about 2 kilometers in diameter) from Soufriere Volcano, St. Vincent, West Indies, 17 April 1979. The turbulent column, produced by the most powerful explosion of the 1979 activity, was observed to rise at an average velocity of 50 meters per second to an altitude of about 18 to 20 kilometers. The rising column apparently entrained and deformed preexisting subhorizontal layers of moist and less-moist air from lower altitudes and carried them to levels where the moist layers condensed to form the visible skirt clouds. See page 1105. [Photographed by K. C. Rowley, University of West Indies, from a low-flying aircraft piloted by Duncan Richardson]