FEASIBILITY OF A 100-YEAR REANALYSIS USING ONLY SURFACE PRESSURE DATA

by Gilbert P. Compo, Jeffrey S. Whitaker, and Prashant D. Sardeshmukh

A modern data assimilation system could use available surface pressure observations to produce a consistent dataset of the daily extratropical circulation from the late-nineteenth century to the present.

In the early 1940s, officials in the United States recognized the need for a comprehensive series of synoptic weather maps extending over the twentieth century to use for meteorological studies and further the war effort (U.S. Weather Bureau 1944). The Weather Bureau and U.S. Army keyed in manuscript station and marine observations and trained meteorologists to make daily sea level pressure (SLP) analyses, resulting in the U.S. Historical Weather Map Series (USHWM) spanning from

January 1899 to June 1939. An example map is shown in Fig. 1. These hand-drawn analyses were recognized for their value, and were digitized in the 1970s by the National Weather Service Extended Forecast Division (NCAR 2005). This original "reanalysis" effort and subsequent additions form the Daily Northern Hemisphere Sea Level Pressure Grids dataset. Not long after their digitization, however, researchers realized that the dataset contains substantial errors and inhomogeneities (e.g., Williams and van Loon 1976; Trenberth and Paolino 1980; Hayden 1984; Jones 1987). Further, the maps do not make use of all observations, being limited, prior to 1940, to collections archived by the United States, and subsequently to only observations collected in near–real time. These errors and limitations hamper the applicability of this dataset to studies of climate variability and change. The surface nature of the maps further limits their use. Climate studies need four-dimensional, dynamically consistent circulation fields to make progress.

In the 1980s, the operational analyses produced by national meteorological centers to support numerical weather prediction (NWP) were recognized as being difficult to use for climate studies because they were

AFFILIATIONS: Compo, Whitaker, and Sardeshmukh—NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory and CIRES Climate Diagnostics Center, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado
CORRESPONDING AUTHOR: Dr. Gilbert P. Compo, NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory and CIRES, Climate Diagnostics Center, R/PSD1, 325 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80305-3328
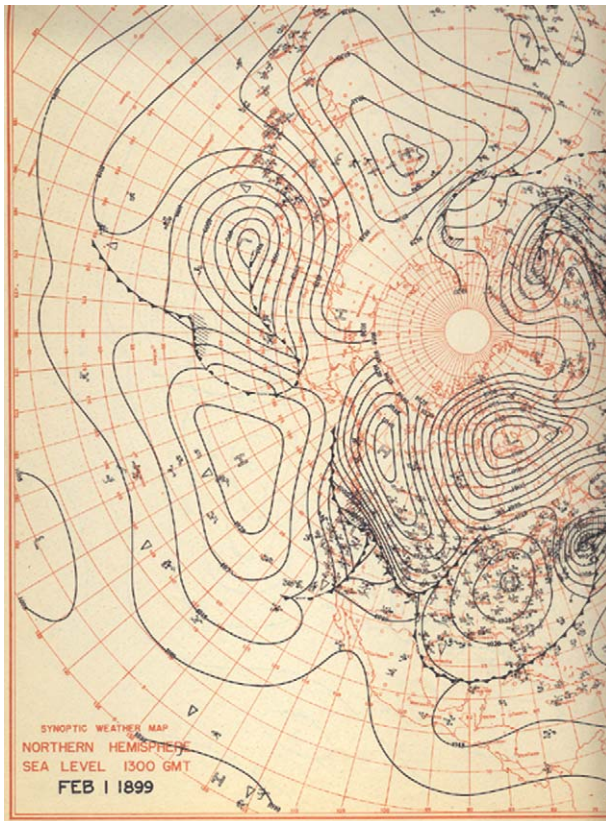E-mail: compo@colorado.edu

Fig. 1. Sea level pressure map for 1300 UTC 1 Feb 1899 (U.S. Weather Bureau 1944). Individual observations used in the map are indicated with synoptic symbols. For this map, 27 marine reports from the U.S. Merchant Marine Collection are present in the Pacific Ocean. The hemispheric network is comparable to what we have used for our 1905 assimilation experiments.

based on observations, data assimilation algorithms, and models that were changing throughout the record as the centers worked to improve their forecast skill (Bengtsson and Shukla 1988). It was proposed that a "reanalysis" be performed, whereby a fixed NWP model and data assimilation algorithm would be used to blend the historical observations into a consistent set of analyses needed for climate research. This reanalysis methodology was expected to eliminate the spurious discontinuities present in the operational analyses. Reanalyses such as the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP)–National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) reanalysis (Kalnay et al. 1996; Kistler et al. 2001) and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) 40-year Re-Analysis (Simmons and Gibson 2000) have now been carried out by several centers. These datasets have been used in many studies of atmospheric variability, particularly at synoptic to interannual time scales.

In addition to reanalyses, several efforts have been successful at reconstructing global fields of monthly mean surface temperature (Kaplan et al. 1998; Rayner et al. 2003; Smith and Reynolds 2004a) and sea level pressure (Smith and Reynolds 2004b; Kaplan et al. 2000; Allan and Ansell 2005, manuscript submitted to *J. Climate*) over the past 150 yr using statistical methods. These longer datasets have been used in many studies of seasonal to decadal variability and climate change.

Three issues limit one's ability to examine climate variability and climate change from synoptic to decadal time scales over the last century. First, the reanalysis datasets are only available from about 1948. Second, the reconstructed datasets are only at the surface and are only monthly means. Monthly means, while valuable in many respects, are unable to capture either high-frequency, synoptic-scale weather events (such as intense extratropical cyclones), or lower-frequency, planetary-scale climate events (such as blocking or the Madden–Julian oscillation) that are of interest in climate research. And finally, the only daily dataset for the first half of the twentieth century, the Northern Hemisphere SLP grids, is also only of a surface field and has well-documented problems.

One might consider reanalyzing the available historical data to extend the record. Unfortunately, the modern reanalysis methodology of using all available observations has resulted in significant inhomogeneities from the time-changing observation network. These range from understated storm-track variability (Harnik and Chang 2003; Chang and Fu 2003; Hodges et al. 2003) to incorrect tropical variability (Newman et al. 2000) and spurious long-term trends (Trenberth and Smith 2005; Bengtsson et al. 2004a,b; Kinter et al. 2004; Kistler et al. 2001; Basist and Chelliah 1997). As one attempts to reanalyze the early twentieth century, or even the nineteenth century, scant upper-air data will be available (Bronnimann et al. 2005). Recent results suggest that the current generation of reanalyses depends on the upper-air data (Bengtsson et al. 2004b; Kanamitsu and Hwang 2006) to produce reasonable tropospheric fields.

There are new research efforts to remedy this situation. Aided by the large quantity of newly recovered pressure observations, the European and North Atlantic Daily to Multidecadal Climate Variability (EMULATE) project has used statistical reconstruction to create 150 yr of daily sea level pressure maps over the data-rich North Atlantic and Europe (Ansell et al. 2005, manuscript submitted to *J. Climate*). The question remains open as to whether modern data assimilation systems can derive useful information, not

just of the near-surface daily atmospheric circulation, but also in the free troposphere, from only surface observations. Results to date are mixed.

Whitaker et al. (2003, 2004) used real surface pressure observations in a network simulating the 1915 network and an ensemble Kalman filter to show that a useful analysis of the 4-times-daily atmospheric circulation at the surface and at 500 hPa could be created for the Northern Hemisphere. Anderson et al. (2005), using a different ensemble filter in a perfect model experiment, and A. J. Simmons and J.-N. Thépaut (2003, personal communication), using the ECMWF four-dimensional variational data assimilation (4DVAR) system with a modern network of real observations, achieved results similar to those of Whitaker et al. (2003, 2004) In contrast, using three-dimensional variational data assimilation (3DVAR) systems, Bengtsson et al. (2004b) and Kanamitsu and Hwang (2006) have reported that surface pressure observations alone cannot be used to make a good analysis of midtropospheric circulations, even in the relatively data-rich Northern Hemisphere. In both of these 3DVAR studies, however, the relative weighting of the first-guess forecast and the observations was appropriate for the modern, complete observing system. These weights may not be appropriate when only sparse observations are assimilated.

Recently, national efforts such as the Climate Change Science Program (Mahoney et al. 2003) and the workshop on the ongoing analysis of the climate system (Arkin et al. 2003), and international efforts such as the Global Climate Observing System (Mason et al. 2004) and Global Earth Observation System of Systems (Group on Earth Observations 2005) have called for reanalysis datasets extending as far back as possible to compare the patterns and magnitudes of recent and projected climate changes in means and extremes with past changes. It is hoped that these longer reanalysis datasets enable researchers to address issues such as the range of natural variability of extreme events (e.g., floods, droughts, hurricanes, extratropical cyclones, and cold waves) and how El Niño–Southern Oscillation and other climate modes alter these events. Given the conflicting previous results, it has not been firmly established how useful such reanalyses, based only on surface observations, would be in addressing these issues.

In this study, we systematically examine the potential for data assimilation systems to reanalyze not only the near-surface circulation, but also the upper-air circulation from the late-nineteenth century to the present using only surface pressure observations. We have chosen three assimilation schemes to make our assessment. A 3DVAR scheme very similar to that used for the NCEP–NCAR reanalysis will allow us to test a system that has been extensively used and studied. An ensemble Kalman filter will represent the potential for advanced data assimilation systems to improve upon older 3DVAR systems. As a baseline measure, similar to using climatology for assessing skill in probabilistic forecasting, we will use a climatologically based statistical interpolation scheme with no dynamical model to advance information to the next analysis time step. This will enable us to quantify the importance of propagating information with a dynamical model.

In all of our experiments we assimilate only surface pressure observations. Measurements of surface pressure have been made consistently throughout the period and should provide more information about the large-scale free-tropospheric circulation than surface wind or surface temperature. The surface pressure information, through geostrophy, can be expected to yield a reasonable approximation to the barotropic part of the flow, which accounts for a substantial part of the total flow. Idealized studies have shown that the surface pressure footprints of vertically tilted baroclinic modes also contain useful information about the amplitudes and phases of those modes throughout the troposphere (Bengtsson 1980).

SIMULATING PAST SURFACE PRESSURE NETWORKS. To investigate the feasibility of a 100-yr or longer reanalysis, we reduced the 2001 observational network to resemble selected historical networks (see sidebar 1) and then performed a series of observing system experiments, assimilating these reduced networks with different data assimilation systems.

We chose to simulate the observational densities of four representative 5-yr periods centered on 1895, 1905, 1915, and 1935 to assess the expected analysis quality from the late-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. To create spatial and temporal distributions using 2001 data that approximate the data density in these periods (Fig. S1), we first eliminated all of the observations from the quality-controlled observational database used to generate the NCEP–NCAR reanalyses (Kalnay et al. 1996) except the surface pressure observations from radiosonde reports and surface marine reports within 30 minutes of the synoptic time. These criteria reduced the total number of observations from 150,000 per analysis to a 2001 thinned network of 2,000 surface pressure observations per analysis. We randomly reduced the 2001 thinned network further so that the number of

Comparing the quantities of surface pressure observations available now to that available even 10 years ago illustrates why a historical reanalysis should be considered now (Fig. S1). We have estimated the number of digitized surface and sea level pressure observations in 5°×5° squares around the globe in each month from 1854 to 1955. Our estimate includes unique land observations from the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) and National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) data archives and marine observations from the Comprehensive Ocean–Atmosphere Data Set (COADS) release 2 (Woodruff et al. 1998). Over the Northern Hemisphere extratropics, the data available from these sources (red curve) have been greatly enhanced by several observation recovery efforts (blue curve). Many more marine pressure data are now available in the International Comprehensive Ocean–Atmosphere Data Set (ICOADS; version 2.1, Woodruff et al. 2005; Worley et al. 2005) compared to the previous COADS dataset. Some digitized marine datasets have not yet been fully blended into ICOADS, such as the Kobe collection 2001 (Manabe 1999) and German Marine Meteorological archive (V. Wagner 2003, personal communication). The unique additional observations from these collections are included in the blue curve.

The pink curve in Fig. S1 includes "proxy" data and current digitization efforts. Prior to 1912, the U.S. Merchant Marine collection has not yet been digitized (J. Elms 2005, personal communication), but the Northern Hemisphere SLP grids based on the USHWM contain these data in the analyzed maps (U.S. Weather Bureau 1944, e.g., see Fig. 1). We have included these grids from 20° to 70°N at their digitized 5° × 10° resolution only over the oceans in our estimate, assuming 70% of those points would be usable. The recently digitized U.S. Marine Meteorological Journals (S. Woodruff 2004, personal communication) are

now available and included in the pink curve. Land data recovery efforts, such as from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Data Modernization Program (CDMP; J. Elms 2005, personal communication), European Union projects (Ansell et al. 2005, manuscript submitted to *J. Climate*), the Waves and Storms in the North Atlantic dataset (Schmith et al. 1997; The WASA Group 1998), Environment Canada pressure observations (V. Swail 2005, personal communication), and other international efforts (R. Jenne 2004, personal communication) further raise the number of observations expected to be available digitally by the end of 2005. We have attempted to simulate surface pressure networks for these data densities.

We have also made a conservative estimate of the number of additional

observations that could be available by assuming that the Global Historical Climatology Network (GHCN; Vose et al. 1992) monthly station pressure observations could be available once per day (Fig. S1, black curve). This is conservative in the sense that many stations reported two or more times per day, and the GHCN does not include all reporting stations. Further, we have made no attempt to estimate the number of undigitized marine observations, which for the Kobe collection alone could be more than 6.5 million global reports from 1890 to 1930 (Manabe 1999). Volumes of data undigitized from sources such as U.K. logbooks, the U.S. Merchant Marine Collection prior to 1912, and the U.S. Navy are unknown but estimated to be in the tens of millions of reports for this period (S. Woodruff 2005, personal communication).
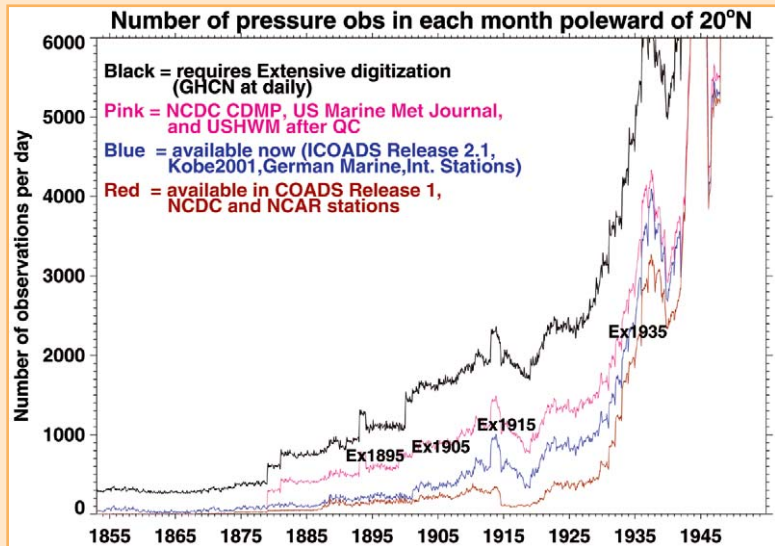

Fig. S1. Our estimate of the number of Northern Hemisphere (20°N–90°) surface pressure observations available per day from land and marine sources: based on previous COADS and land sources (red curve); now available including ICOADS release 2.1 and Kobe collection 2000 (blue curve); including digitization underway, U.S. Marine meteorological journals, and quality control of the U.S. Historical Weather Map Series (pink curve); including international and U.S. data available in manuscript form in NCDC archives (black curve). Years indicated with "Ex" show the number of observations used per day in the assimilation experiments.

observations retained in 5° × 5° regions over the globe mimicked the number of observations actually avail-

able per day in each of our historical periods. Ideally, we would specify the observational error statistics that

are appropriate for our historical periods. However, at present, nothing is known about these statistics. Therefore, we decided to use the modern observational estimates of 1 hPa for station observations and 1.6 hPa for marine observations. An example analysis network for the 1895 simulation is shown in Fig. 2. In the example, the sparse network density and the paucity of observations available over the central Pacific are especially apparent.

With the four sets of surface pressure observations, we investigated the ability of our three candidate assimilation systems to create 6-hourly three-dimensional analyses for June and December 2001: the NCEP Climate Data Assimilation System (CDAS; Kistler et al. 2001; Kalnay et al. 1996) modified for surface pressure only (CDAS-SFC), an ensemble Kalman filter or ensemble filter (EnsFilt; Whitaker et al. 2004), and a "climatological ensemble filter" (EnsClim; Whitaker et al. 2004) loosely approximating a traditional statistical interpolation scheme. The NCEP CDAS system is a 3DVAR system (Parrish and Derber 1992) with static uncertainties (background-error covariances) for its first-guess forecast field tuned to represent the uncertainties of 6-h model forecasts started from analyses that used all of the observations in the modern network (Kistler et al. 2001). We modified the CDAS system in several ways to adapt it to the assimilation of only surface pressure observations, forming the CDAS-SFC system, as described in Whitaker et al. (2004). We inflated the background error covariances to reflect the less accurate analyses and subsequent forecasts expected when only assimilating surface pressure observations. Through trial and error we determined that multiplying by a factor of 16 was necessary to reduce the analysis error, but we did not modify the spatial structure of the covariances. This changed the expected error in the first guess from about 2 hPa in the midlatitudes to about
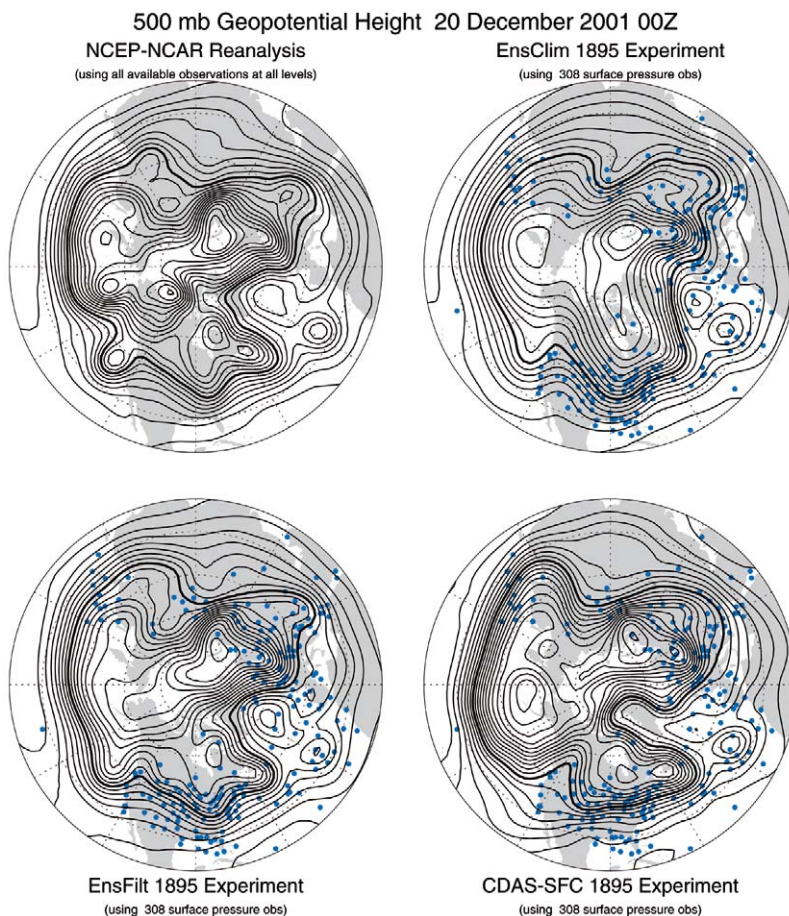

500 mb Geopotential Height 20 December 2001 00Z

Fig. 2. Comparison of analyses of 0000 UTC 20 Dec 2001 500-hPa geopotential height from (top left) full NCEP–NCAR reanalysis using all available observations at all levels (> 150,000) and parallel assimilation experiments with a simulated 1895 network of only 308 surface pressure observations from (top right) EnsClim (rms difference with full NCEP–NCAR reanalysis is 95.7 m), (bottom left) EnsFilt (rms difference with full reanalysis is 49.2 m), and (bottom right) CDAS-SFC (rms difference with full reanalysis is 96.0 m). Blue dots indicate the location of the surface pressure observations used to make the experimental analyses. The 5500-m line is thickened, and the contour interval is 50 m.

$2 \times (16)^{1/2} = 8$ hPa. We also found that a constraint on the divergence tendency in the CDAS system severely limited the effect of a surface-pressure observation on the analysis. This constraint was turned off with no detrimental effects and resulted in a significant decrease in analysis error.

Idealized studies have suggested that an ensemble Kalman filter (Evensen 1994; Burgers et al. 1998), or ensemble filter, may have smaller analysis errors than that of the 3DVAR when observations are sparse (Hamill and Snyder 2000). To evaluate this potential advantage, we have used a particular ensemble filter (Whitaker and Hamill 2002) from the family of "ensemble square root filters" recently reviewed by Tippett et al. (2003).

This ensemble filter has a simple implementation when observations are processed one at a time. Assume that we have an n-member ensemble of first-guess fields, with the jth member $\mathbf{x}_j^b$ representing the complete state vector of the forecast model (e.g., wind, temperature, humidity, and surface pressure fields on the model domain). The sample mean of these fields is

$$\overline{\mathbf{x}}^b = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \mathbf{x}_j^b,$$

and the deviations from the mean are

$$\mathbf{x}_j'^b = \mathbf{x}_j^b - \overline{\mathbf{x}}^b.$$

We denote the first surface pressure observation to be assimilated as y^o and the ensemble mean and deviations interpolated to the observation location as

$$\overline{y}^b = \mathbf{H}\overline{\mathbf{x}}^b \quad \text{and} \quad y_j'^b = \mathbf{H}\mathbf{x}_j'^b,$$

respectively, with $\mathbf{H}$ being the operator that interpolates the first-guess surface pressure field to the observation location. We combine the first-guess ensemble and the observation to form an n-member analysis ensemble, whose mean $\overline{\mathbf{x}}^a$ and deviations $\mathbf{x}_j'^a$ are calculated via

$$\overline{\mathbf{x}}^a = \overline{\mathbf{x}}^b + \mathbf{K}(y^o - \overline{y}^b) \tag{1}$$

and

$$\mathbf{x}_j'^a = \mathbf{x}_j'^b - \tilde{\mathbf{K}}(y_j'^b), \tag{2}$$

where the Kalman gain $\mathbf{K}$ is given by

$$\mathbf{K} = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \mathbf{x}_j'^b y_j'^b \left(\frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{j=1}^{n} y_j'^b y_j'^b + R \right)^{-1}, \tag{3}$$

and the modified Kalman gain $\tilde{\mathbf{K}}$ is given by

$$\tilde{\mathbf{K}} = \left(1 + \sqrt{\frac{R}{\frac{1}{n-1}\sum_{j=1}^{n} y_j'^b y_j'^b + R}} \right)^{-1} \mathbf{K}. \tag{4}$$

We assume that the observation y^o has a specified observational error variance R that represents both the measurement error associated with the observation and the error associated with representing a large area (i.e., an NWP model grid box) from a point

measurement. We further assume that the error in y^o is uncorrelated with all the other observations to be assimilated. The model means, variances, and covariances in Eqs. (1)–(4) are all unbiased sample estimates from the $n = 100$ member ensemble. Within the limitations of using an imperfect model and finite ensembles, this formulation represents a minimum-error estimate of the "true" state (Lorenc 1986), represented here by the analysis ensemble mean $\overline{\mathbf{x}}^a$. To assimilate subsequent observations, the 100 members of the analysis ensemble $\mathbf{x}_j^a$ become the new first-guess ensemble and Eqs. (1)–(4) are applied iteratively for each observation. After all available observations have been assimilated, the 100-member set of analyses $\mathbf{x}_j^a = \overline{\mathbf{x}}^a + \mathbf{x}_j'^a$ becomes the 100 initial conditions for the subsequent 6-h forecast–analysis cycle (see Whitaker et al. 2004 for a complete description).

Model error and sampling error prevent the ensemble-estimated background error covariances from being optimal in the Kalman update equation [(1)]. To address this, the background error covariances are inflated in amplitude (Anderson and Anderson 1999) and localized in space (Houtekamer and Mitchell 2001; Hamill et al. 2001). Such ad hoc measures are required to prevent a condition called filter divergence (Hamill et al. 2001), in which the weight given to the ensemble first guess relative to the observations increases monotonically with time, while the first guess drifts farther and farther away from the observations.

Both the CDAS-SFC and the ensemble filter use an NWP model to generate their first guess and dynamically propagate information forward to the next analysis time. The model is a 1998 version of the NCEP global medium-range forecast model (Kanamitsu et al. 1991). The model is spectral with a triangular truncation at wavenumber 62 (about 1.9° × 1.9° grid spacing) and has 28 sigma levels. The model physics are described in Wu and Iredell (1997). The model is the same as that recently used to create a consistent series of reforecasts from 1979 to the present (Hamill et al. 2005) and is still being used operationally at NCEP to generate certain probabilistic precipitation and near-surface temperature forecast products (NCEP 2005). Surface boundary conditions were taken from the NCEP–NCAR reanalysis and were the same for the CDAS-SFC and each ensemble member.

As a baseline for the CDAS-SFC and ensemble filter, we employ a statistical interpolation scheme with no dynamical model to propagate information to the next analysis. This scheme uses the 1971–2000 NCEP–NCAR reanalysis climatology as the first guess, and the climatological anomaly covariances as

the background error covariances for that first guess. Our EnsClim is implemented in a similar manner to the ensemble filter described above [Eqs. (1)–(4)], but instead of using an ensemble of model forecasts integrated from the previous ensemble of analyses, a random ensemble of NCEP–NCAR reanalysis states from 1971 to 2000 is used as the first-guess ensemble for each analysis. This system represents a Monte Carlo approximation to the climatological mean and climatological anomaly covariances.

ANALYSES CREATED USING ONLY SURFACE PRESSURE OBSERVATIONS.

A representative example of a 500-hPa geopotential height analysis using the simulated 1895 network at 0000 UTC 20 December 2001 is shown in Fig. 2. Analyses produced with the three data assimilation systems using only surface pressure observations are compared with the analysis from the full NCEP–NCAR reanalysis, which uses all available observations at all levels. The EnsClim analysis depicts many of the large-scale features associated with this time, including a substantial block over the North Atlantic and deep troughs over Europe and the North Pacific, but misses the smaller synoptic-scale features. In contrast, the CDAS-SFC analysis has many small-scale features, but they are positioned incorrectly, resulting in an error comparable to that of the EnsClim. The ensemble filter is able to represent not only the large-scale features, but also many of the synoptic-scale features, and has an overall smaller error for this case.

Statistics summarizing the accuracy of the analyses are illustrated in Fig. 3 for geopotential height

over the extratropical Northern Hemisphere. As an estimate of the analysis error and analysis quality, we have computed the root-mean-square (rms) difference and anomaly pattern correlation with the full NCEP–NCAR reanalyses (Kalnay et al. 1996). For reference, we have compared the analysis error to the forecast errors of 1979–2001 reforecasts that were made using this same model and the NCEP–NCAR reanalysis fields as initial conditions (Hamill et al. 2005). We will refer to this forecast error as "modern NWP forecast error," because it is representative of operational NWP forecast errors over the period (Simmons and Hollingsworth 2002).[1]

All three systems are capable of making 6-hourly height analyses that are "useful" as defined by errors smaller than the climatological standard deviation at every level in the troposphere. Each system pro-

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[1] Simmons and Hollingsworth (2002, their Figs. 6 and 8) show that operational ECMWF 500-hPa geopotential height rms forecast error over the Northern Hemisphere varied from 1981 to 2001. As an example, the winter day-3 error was ~60 m in 1981, ~40 m in 1994, and ~30 m in 2001. The reforecast rms error averaged over the period of 1979–2001 for the same quantity (Fig. 3) is 47 m. Currently, operational NWP forecasts, using much higher resolution models, have skill that is about 1 day better than our definition of modern NWP forecast error (A. Lorenc 2005, personal communication). For example, the day-3 rms error of the operational NCEP Global Forecast System for December 2004 was ~35 m (P. Caplan 2005, personal communication), comparable to the day-2 error shown in Fig. 3.

RMS Error and Anomaly Correlation Skill of 6-hourly Northern Hemisphere geopotential height analyses using only Surface Pressure Observations at _1895_ densities
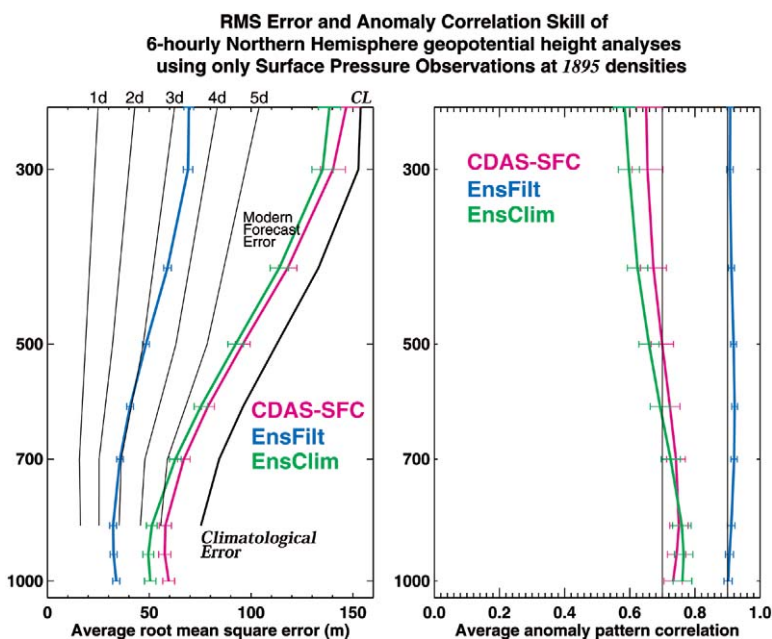
Fig. 3. Variation of Northern Hemisphere skill analyzing Dec 2001 using different assimilation systems and the same surface pressure observations simulating an 1895 network. (left) Colored curves show the monthly averaged 6-hourly rms differences over the Northern Hemisphere (20°–90°N) between geopotential height analyses from full NCEP–NCAR reanalysis and assimilation experiments using only surface pressure observations at 1895 densities and EnsClim, CDAS-SFC, and EnsFilt. Thin solid black curves show rms error of _modern_ NWP forecasts at days 1 through 5. Thick solid black curve shows climatological std dev. (right) Colored curves show the monthly average of 6-hourly anomaly pattern correlations over the Northern Hemisphere of geopotential height anomalies from full NCEP–NCAR reanalyses and assimilation experiments.

RMS Error and Anomaly Correlation Skill of 6-hourly Northern Hemisphere geopotential height analyses using only Surface Pressure Observations at *1905* densities
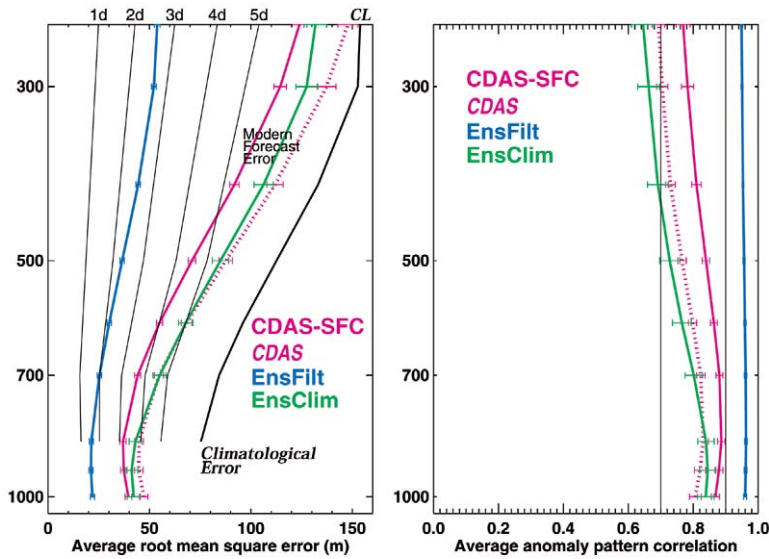
Fig. 4. Same as in Fig. 3, but for simulated 1905 observational densities. Results using the untuned **CDAS** are indicated by the dotted curves.

RMS Error of 6-hourly 500 mb geopotential height analyses using only Surface Pressure Observations at *1905* densities
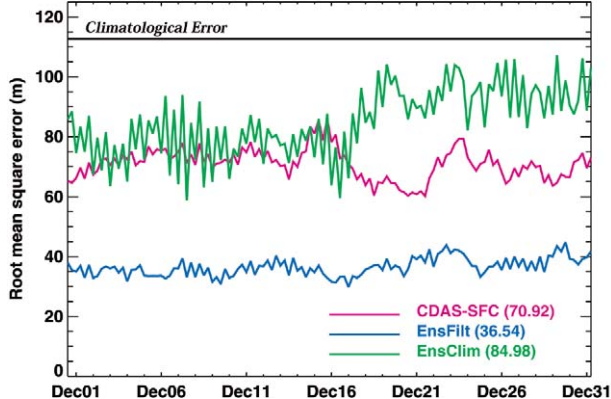
Fig. 5. Time series of the 500-hPa geopotential height rms difference between analyses of Dec 2001 from the full NCEP–NCAR reanalysis and from the assimilation experiments. The rms is averaged over the Northern Hemisphere (20°–90°N). Climatological std dev is indicated by the thick black line.

ascertained that all three systems reproduce the large-scale aspects of the flow relatively well, but using the time-varying background error covariance estimated from a (relatively expensive) 100-member ensemble yields a substantial benefit in this data-sparse case. Expected errors in the lower troposphere are comparable to the day-3 modern NWP forecast error, for example, about 50 m at 500 hPa.

As more observations are added to the network, the relative superiority of the ensemble filter decreases in the lower troposphere, as illustrated for the 1905 experiment in Fig. 4. All three systems now well exceed pattern correlations of 0.7 for the lower troposphere, with correlations above 0.95 for many levels with the ensemble filter. The CDAS-SFC system produces a significantly better analysis than that of the EnsClim away from the surface. Results using the untuned CDAS (dotted curves) demonstrate the importance of tuning the 3DVAR system to account for the large forecast uncertainty when assimilating only surface observations.

In addition to having a relatively small error when averaged over the month, the analysis quality for each of the systems is fairly consistent at each time (Fig. 5). It may seem surprising that the CDAS-SFC surface system is not able to reconstruct the 500-hPa heights as well as the ensemble filter despite having the same specified boundary conditions and a model-propagated forecast as the first guess. Part of the reason may lie in the prescribed structure of the background error covariances, which prevents a surface pressure observation from making a large change to the upper-level first guess (see Fig. S2, in sidebar 2). In contrast, the ensemble filter can use a surface pressure observation to make a larger change in the first guess at upper-levels than at the surface, and a larger change away from the observation location than at that location. One can speculate that an advanced 3DVAR with reformulated, more complex background error covariances that vary spatially (e.g., Wu et al. 2002; Purser et al. 2003) or with the flow (e.g. Riishojgaard 1998; Buehner 2005) could result in a large improvement relative to the CDAS-SFC results.

Evidence that the time-varying nature of the background-error covariances in the ensemble filter

duces average anomaly pattern correlations in the lower troposphere exceeding 0.7, which is a frequently used minimum for a useful correlation. The use of a forecast model appears to give the CDAS-SFC system no advantage over EnsClim, suggesting either that the specified background error covariances for the CDAS-SFC system do not optimally represent the error of its forecasts or that the sparse observation network cannot constrain the evolution of a single model integration. We have

system is contributing to its smaller error can be found in the analysis error time series (Fig. 5). The CDAS-SFC analysis error has large excursions from its mean value, reflecting those times when the static background-error covariances are a relatively bad (or good) estimate of the actual first-guess error statistics. In contrast, the ensemble filter analysis error varies much less, suggesting that the flow-dependent background-error covariances are able to produce analyses of a more uniform quality.

INFLUENCE OF A SINGLE PRESSURE OBSERVATION ON THE RESULTING ANALYSIS

To compare the effect of pressure observations in the Ensemble Filter and CDAS-SFC systems, we have conducted four single-observation assimilation experiments. Two "observations" were assimilated separately by both systems. Each observation was prescribed to have a value 1 hPa larger than the surface pressure forecast for 0600 UTC 25 December 2001 from the previous assimilation using a 1905 network. The results of the two separate experiments are plotted together in Fig. S2 to make a summary of the results; it is evident that neither observation would significantly influence the analysis of the other.

The filled contours show the first-guess geopotential height field at (bottom) 1000 and (top) 300 hPa from the CDAS-SFC (left) and ensemble filter (right). The line contours show the analysis increment, the difference between the analysis after assimilating the indicated observation and the first-guess field. For the CDAS-SFC system the analysis increment of a single observation does not depend on longitude. For surface pressure observations the increment is centered on the observation location, is largest at the surface, and decreases with the height. Increments are a maximum of 6.9 m for 1000-hPa heights and 5.5 m for 300-hPa heights.

The right panels illustrate the ability of the ensemble filter to create spatially inhomogeneous background error covariances that change with the flow and observational density. The analysis increments produced by the two observations are quite different, commensurate with the larger expected uncertainty in the observation-poor central Pacific and smaller uncertainty in the observation-rich continental North America. The larger uncertainty becomes a larger analysis increment. The uncertainty in the first guess, the background-error covariance, over the mid-Pacific translates an observation 1 hPa above the background into a general weakening of the nearby trough, with a maximum weakening at 1000 hPa of 8.8 m directly to the *east* of the observation. The background-error covariance further translates the single observation into a weakening of the upper-level trough, but with maximum weakening at 300 hPa of 10.5 m to the *southeast* of the observation location. In this case, a single surface pressure observation is producing an analysis increment that is tilted with height and having maximum amplitude in the upper troposphere. The ensemble filter also changes the sign of the increment to the northwest of the observation. Even over the interior continent, the effect of the single observation, though smaller, still has maximum amplitude in the upper troposphere and is tilted with height. Most likely, the ability to produce analysis increments that vary with the flow and the observation network gives the ensemble filter its advantage in the extratropics. A more complex 3DVAR formulation could also possess these flow-dependent properties (e.g., Riishojgaard 1998; Buehner 2005) and may have a similar advantage over the CDAS-SFC system.
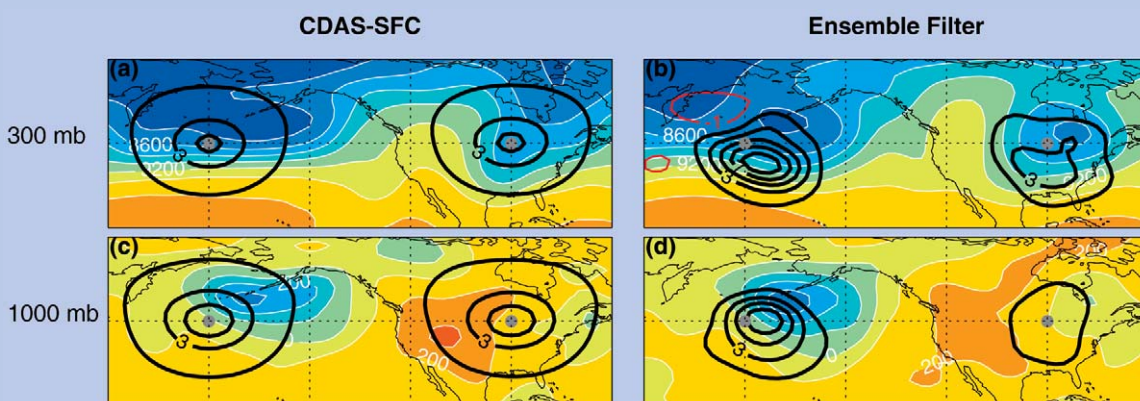
CDAS-SFC   **Ensemble Filter**

Fɪɢ. S2. **Effect of a single surface pressure observation (gray dot) on the final analysis. Filled contours show the first-guess field from (a), (c) CDAS-SFC and (b), (d) ensemble filter for geopotential height at (a), (b) 300 and (c), (d) 1000 hPa. Line contours show the analysis increment after assimilating a single pressure observation that is 1 hPa larger than the first-guess pressure field at the indicated location (gray dots). The two gray dots represent two separate experiments. First-guess (filled) contour interval is 100 hPa. Analysis increment (line) contour interval is 2 m starting at 1 m. Positive (negative) increments are indicated with black (red) contours.**

The regional variation of analysis quality for the 1905 experiment is illustrated in Fig. 6 (left panels) for several variables using the ensemble filter 700-hPa analyses. The number of observations in each 2.5° × 2.5° grid box is also shown. The variations of the 700-hPa wind and mass fields are both recovered well throughout the Northern Hemisphere extratropics despite the dramatically varying observational density used.

One sees a different story for the Tropics, where only some of the mass field variations are recovered with skill in regions of dense observations, such as over the tropical Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The wind field is poorly recovered, with correlations below 0.2 in many areas. Previous studies (e.g., Parrish and Derber 1992; Zagar et al. 2005) have shown that a tropical pressure observation makes little change to the tropical wind first guess and, therefore, has little impact on the tropical wind analysis. In contrast, we find that the ensemble filter can produce a substantial covariance between the first-guess surface pressure and tropical wind fields, resulting in modifications to the first-guess tropical wind field that are on the same order (0.5–1 m s⁻¹) as in the midlatitudes. The resulting low quality of the ensemble filter tropical wind analyses (Fig. 6) suggests that the cross covariances between tropical surface pressure and wind are in error. Whether it is indeed possible to produce useful tropical wind analyses using only surface pressure observations is an open research question.

Over the Southern Hemisphere, despite very sparse observations expected for 1905, Fig. 6 suggests that a surface pressure–based reanalysis should be able to reconstruct the lower-tropospheric circulation of some regions at the start of the twentieth century. Still, many regions, such as the South Pacific, are expected to be poorly analyzed, reflecting the lack of observations.

The results for the simulated 1935 network (Fig. 6, right panels) suggest that the analysis quality for the Northern Hemisphere extratropics will be consistent throughout the twentieth century, while the quality for the Tropics and Southern Hemisphere will increase with additional observations. Correlations for the tropical 700-hPa height field now are above 0.7 throughout most of the Tropics. However, the wind field remains poorly analyzed. For the Southern Hemisphere, the results are more encouraging. For instance, in the better-observed parts of the Southern Hemisphere extratropics (20°–70°S), the

Anomaly Correlation Skill of 700 mb analyses using Ensemble Filter and only Surface Pressure Observations
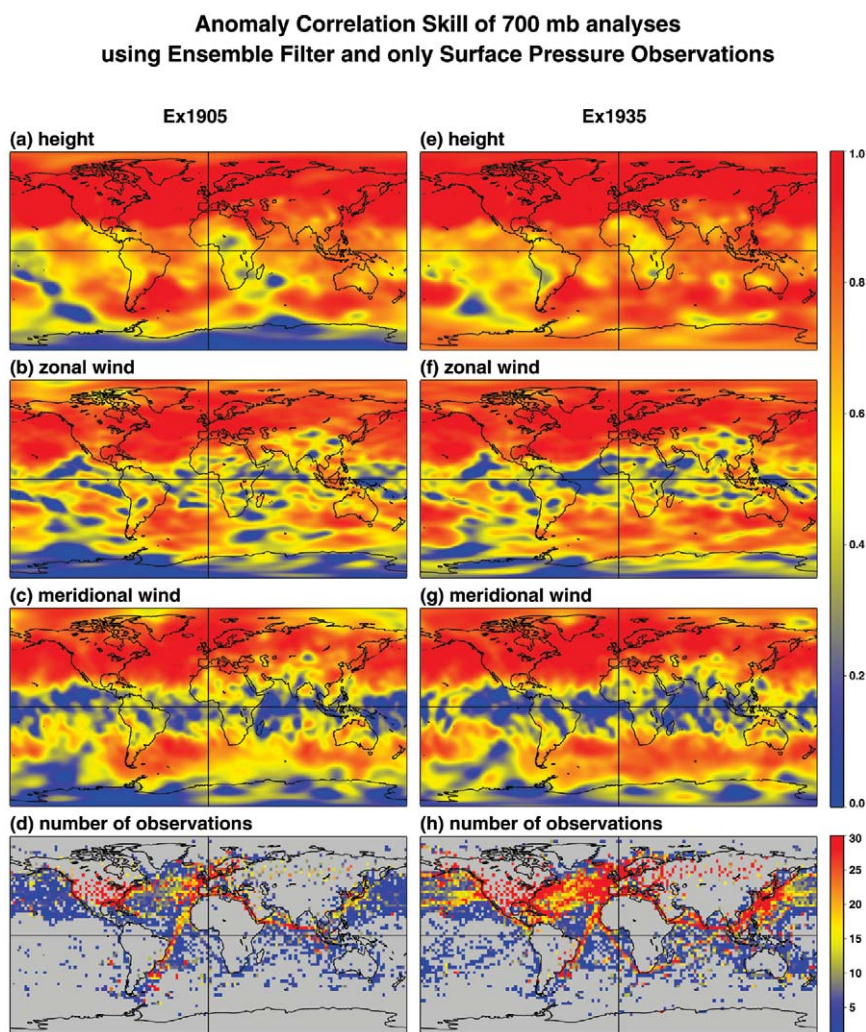
FIG**. 6. Local anomaly correlation of Dec 2001 4-times-daily analyses from the full NCEP–NCAR reanalysis and (left) 1905 and (right) 1935 assimilation experiments using the ensemble filter. Correlations are shown for (a), (e) 700-mb geopotential height; (b), (f) 700-mb zonal wind; and (c), (g) 700-mb meridional wind. Colors in the bottom panels indicate the number of surface pressure observations used in each 2.5° × 2.5° grid box.**

areal fraction of the 700-hPa zonal wind correlations above 0.7 goes from 29.6% for the 1905 network (Fig. 6b) to 51.3% for the 1935 network (Fig. 6f).

Overall, prospects appear very promising for high-quality analyses of the wintertime Northern Hemisphere circulation throughout the depth of the troposphere from the 1890s to the present (Figs. 7, 8). Once a sufficient number and spatial coverage of surface pressure observations, spanning the hemisphere, is reached, additional observations do not further improve the upper-tropospheric analyses. In the middle and lower troposphere, the analyses continue to improve with additional observations. Comparing the results for the simulated 1895 network (red curves) to the 1905 network (blue curves) is particularly instructive. The 1905 network anticipates only 30 more observations per analysis, but these are all located in the North Pacific (e.g., Fig. 1). Additional observations for this region enhance the analysis quality and should be a priority in data-recovery efforts.

The Northern Hemisphere 6-hourly meridional wind field is also reconstructed well throughout the depth of the troposphere (Fig. 8). These curves support the idea that synoptic variability could be reasonably well captured by reanalyses using only surface pressure observations. Meridional wind anomalies are important for quantities such as the transport of heat, momentum, and moisture. More than 1 month of data will be necessary in future studies to compare the statistics of transports determined from analyses using only surface pressure with those from analyses using all observations. Still, the high skill in reconstructing the meridional wind, zonal wind (Fig. 6), and geopotential height (Figs. 6, 7) suggests that such second-order statistics may also be captured with reasonable accuracy.
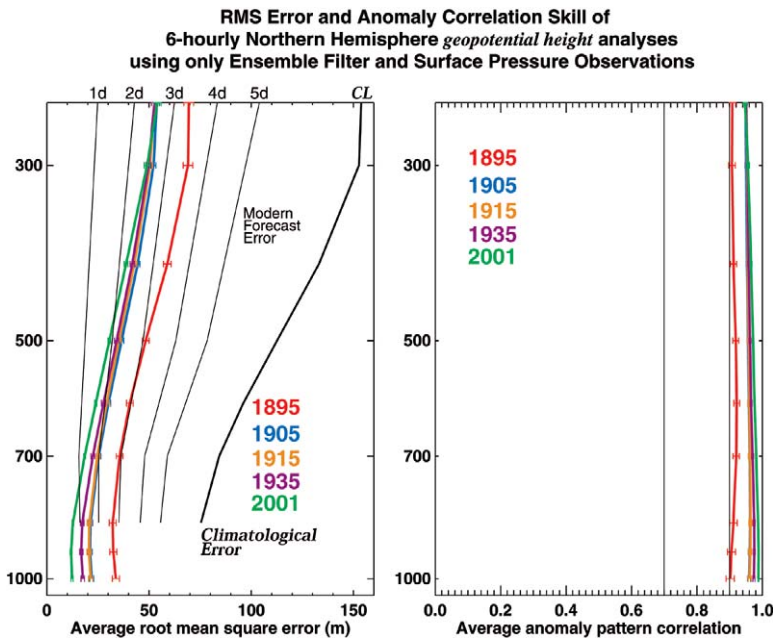

FIG. 7. Variation of skill analyzing Dec 2001 using different simulated networks and the ensemble filter. (left) Colored curves show the average rms difference over the Northern Hemisphere (20°–90°N) between 6-hourly geopotential height analyses from full NCEP–NCAR reanalysis and ensemble filter assimilation experiments using only surface pressure observations at 1895, 1905, 1915, 1935, and 2001 densities. Thin solid black curves show *modern* rms error of NWP forecasts at days 1 through 5. Thick solid black curve shows climatological standard deviation. (right) Colored curves show the monthly average of 6-hourly anomaly pattern correlations over the Northern Hemisphere of geopotential height anomalies from full NCEP–NCAR reanalyses and assimilation experiments.
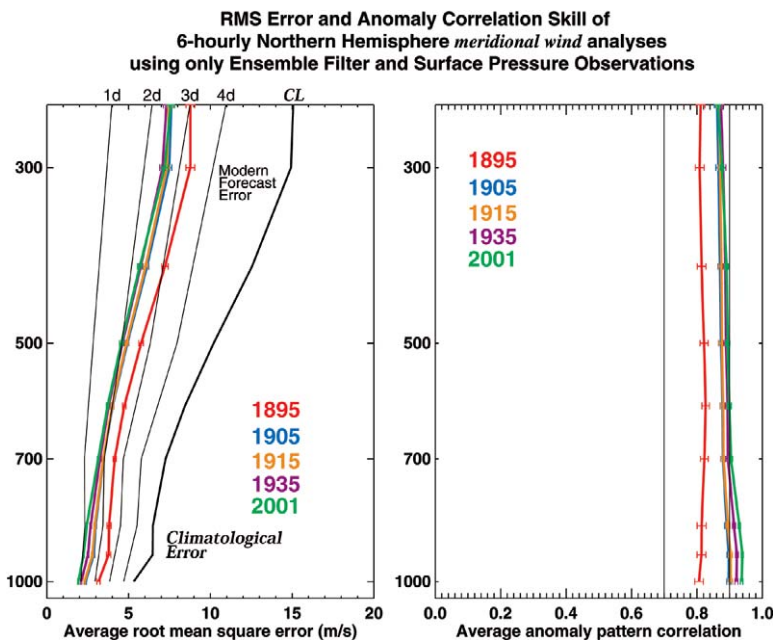

FIG. 8. Variation of skill over the Northern Hemisphere analyzing Dec 2001 meridional wind using varying simulated networks and the ensemble filter, as in Fig. 7.

Having demonstrated that consistent analyses for the twentieth century could be possible for the Northern Hemisphere extratropics, with networks similar to those currently digitized, we now further investigate other regions of the globe. Over the Tropics, the EnsClim, CDAS-SFC, and ensemble filter have similar analysis errors, providing some useful information about the mass field with the 1935 network (e.g., Fig. 6e, other methods not shown). It may be surprising that, for this region, the dynamically based methods have no advantage compared to the EnsClim in recovering even the 1000-mb daily averaged geopotential height field (Fig. 9). All three methods have pattern correlations that average just above 0.7, which is the lower limit of our definition of utility. The results show that the model propagation of the previous analysis field is not leading to a subsequent improvement in the analysis; a climatological first guess is performing just as well. Model errors (e.g., Hendon et al. 2000) may be eliminating the expected advantage of the CDAS-SFC and ensemble filter systems over that of the EnsClim. Model improvement may be necessary before more advanced data assimilation methods are able to improve upon the EnsClim. It is also possible that an empirically derived dynamical model may outperform a numerical one for this purpose, in the same way that an empirical model outperforms the tropical forecasts of this numerical model beyond 1 week (Newman et al. 2003). Increasing the number of surface pressure observations may help the analysis, but even the full 2001 network produces anomaly pattern correlations for geopotential height that are still just above 0.8 at 1000 hPa and fall below 0.7 above 700 hPa (not shown).

For the Southern Hemisphere extratropics, in contrast to the tropical results, increasing the number of obser-

vations will dramatically improve the analysis quality (Fig. 10). A useful analysis appears possible after 1935. This result is consistent for other variables (not shown). It is interesting to note that the analysis quality *decreases* from 1895 to 1915. This behavior arises from the decreasing number of pressure observations over this period in the current digital archive (not shown). Recovering additional pressure observations for the Southern Hemisphere can be expected to increase the analysis quality throughout the troposphere commensurate with the observational network (Fig. 6).

It is also important to investigate how the analysis quality will vary through the seasonal cycle. Results for analyses of June 2001 indicate that upper-tropospheric analyses in the Northern Hemisphere summer will not be as good as during winter but will still have useful information (Fig. 11). Experiments were performed for June 2001 using only 1905 and 2001 networks and the ensemble filter to suggest the range of error expected as the network varies. In the upper troposphere, analysis errors are comparable to the day-4 modern NWP forecast error, and anomaly pattern correlations are on the order of 0.8. In the lower troposphere, additional observations will improve the analysis quality, with errors for the 1905 network comparable to those of the 2–3-day forecast error. There is a strong similarity between the summer results of the two hemispheres—December in the Southern Hemisphere (Fig. 10) and June in the Northern Hemisphere (Fig. 11). In the Southern Hemisphere for June 2001, results improve somewhat compared to December 2001, with geopotential height pattern correlations using the 2001 network that are greater than 0.85 in the upper troposphere (not shown).

CONCLUSIONS. The original goal of this study was to determine whether modern data assimilation systems could use the available historical surface pressure observations to produce accurate daily surface weather maps for the period from the nineteenth century to the present. We have concluded that not only are surface weather maps feasible, but the surface pressure observations could be used to reanalyze the entire extratropical tropospheric circulation.

For the Northern Hemisphere winter, such a reanalysis using the ensemble filter can be expected to be of high quality, as measured by analysis errors that are substantially less than the climatological standard deviation for all dynamical variables. We expect the analysis error to be on the order of the modern NWP 1–2-day forecast error in the lower troposphere and the 2–3-day forecast error in the middle and upper troposphere. This modern NWP forecast error is based on 1979–2001 reforecast skill using a 1998 NCEP model and NCEP–NCAR reanalysis
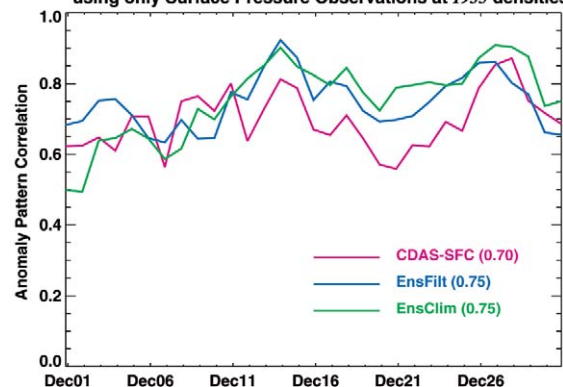

FIG. 9. Time series of daily averaged 1000-hPa height anomaly pattern correlation over the Tropics (20°N–20°S). Assimilation experiment analyses of Dec 2001 using the simulated 1935 surface pressure network are correlated with the full NCEP–NCAR reanalyses.

fields as initial conditions. Currently operational NWP forecasts have forecast errors that are about 1 day better than are shown here (A. Lorenc 2005, personal communication; P. Caplan 2005, personal communication).

Summertime analysis errors for the Northern Hemisphere will be relatively larger than those in winter (closer to the modern NWP 3-day forecast error in the lower troposphere and the 4-day error in the upper troposphere), but still much less than the climatological standard deviation throughout the depth of the troposphere. In contrast, in the Tropics and the Southern Hemisphere currently available surface pressure observations are insufficient for a useful reanalysis before 1935. Additional digitized observations will aid in producing a better analysis over the globe, with pressure observations over the Pacific Ocean being of the highest priority.

One previously noted problem with the current generation of reanalyses is their inhomogeneity arising from the time-changing observational network. While there is no subset of station and marine pressure observations that could be kept constant to avoid all inhomogeneities, the results here suggest that a surface pressure–based reanalysis could be more consistent than previous reanalyses, particularly in the upper troposphere, as the observational network varies. Further inhomogeneities may be introduced if the observational error changes over the period of record. Recent evidence suggests that the measurement error characteristics of specific collections within the surface pressure station and marine observational database may vary over time (e.g. Kent and Berry 2005; Ishii et al. 2005; Slonosky and Graham 2005), but the general error characteristics of the complete database are not known. The results of Velicogna et al. (2001) suggest that from one-half to three-quarters of the specified observational error in station pressure observations is assigned based on the error in representing a large area (i.e., a model grid box) by a point measurement. This component of the observational error, the so-called "error of representativeness," will largely be a function of
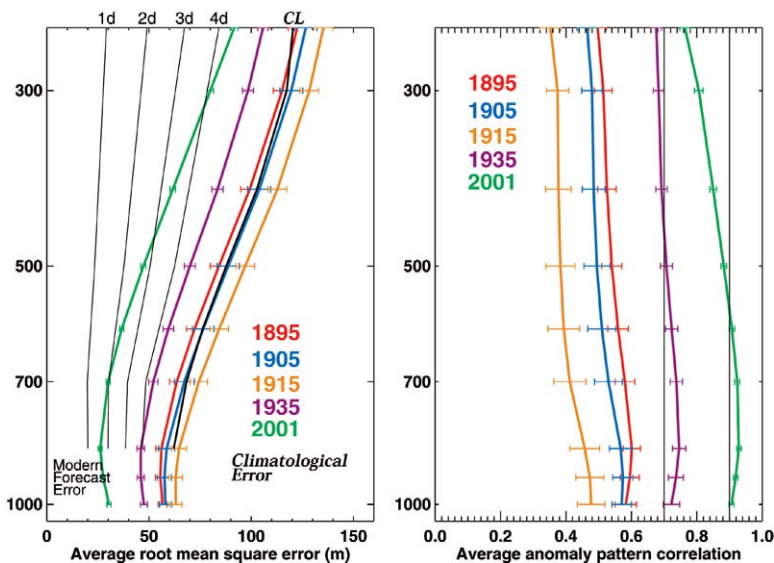
FIG. 10. As in Fig. 7 for Dec 2001, but over the Southern Hemisphere (20°–90°S).
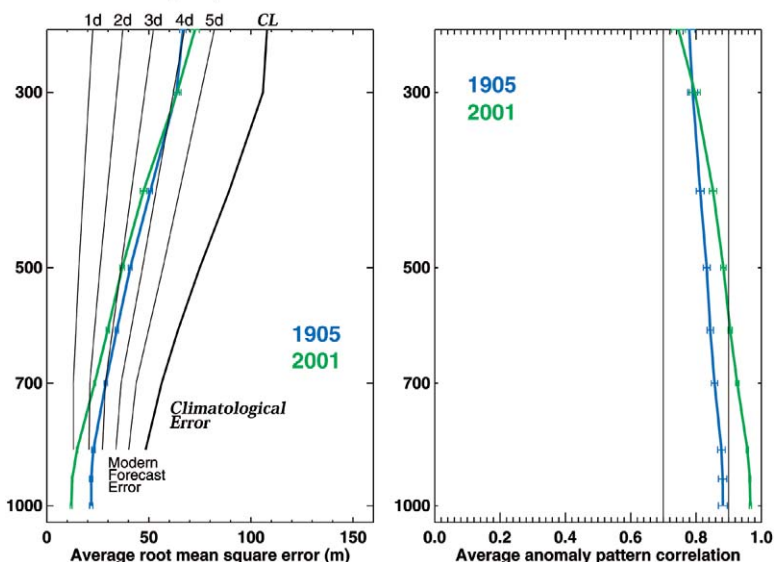

FIG. 11. As in Fig. 7, but skill for Jun 2001 over the Northern Hemisphere using only simulated 1905 and 2001 networks and ensemble filter.

the model resolution and not the measurement accuracy. Therefore, the overall observational error may vary less over the historical period than one might suppose. As estimates of historical observational errors are produced they can be incorporated in the analysis [i.e., Eqs. (3)–(4)]. Because the ensemble filter produces estimates of analysis error [Eq. (2)], the effect of inhomogeneities in

observation networks and observation errors can easily be quantified.

Additional improvements to the results presented here may be possible. Hourly or even more frequent assimilation of surface pressure observations may improve the upper-level analysis, as has been demonstrated with a linear quasi-geostrophic system (Bengtsson 1980), a real 4DVAR application (Jarvinen et al. 1999), and a perfect model ensemble filter experiment (Anderson et al. 2005). Using observations collected past the analysis time may also improve the analysis quality. Unlike an operational analysis, a reanalysis is not constrained to use observations that only precede the analysis time. An ensemble Kalman smoother algorithm, which generalizes the Kalman filter to use observations both before and after the analysis time, has been proposed for this purpose (Whitaker and Compo 2002), building on the work of Cohn et al. (1994). We will investigate whether improvements to the results presented here are possible using frequent or "future" observations.

Having demonstrated that reanalyses using only surface pressure observations are feasible with an expected accuracy much less than that of climatological error, we have left unresolved the issue of whether such reanalyses will be useful for estimating decadal and longer-term trends in the statistics of weather and climate, and especially in the statistics of extreme phenomena. While the results presented here are compelling, they are not conclusive in this regard. Additional observing system experiments could answer these questions more definitively.

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