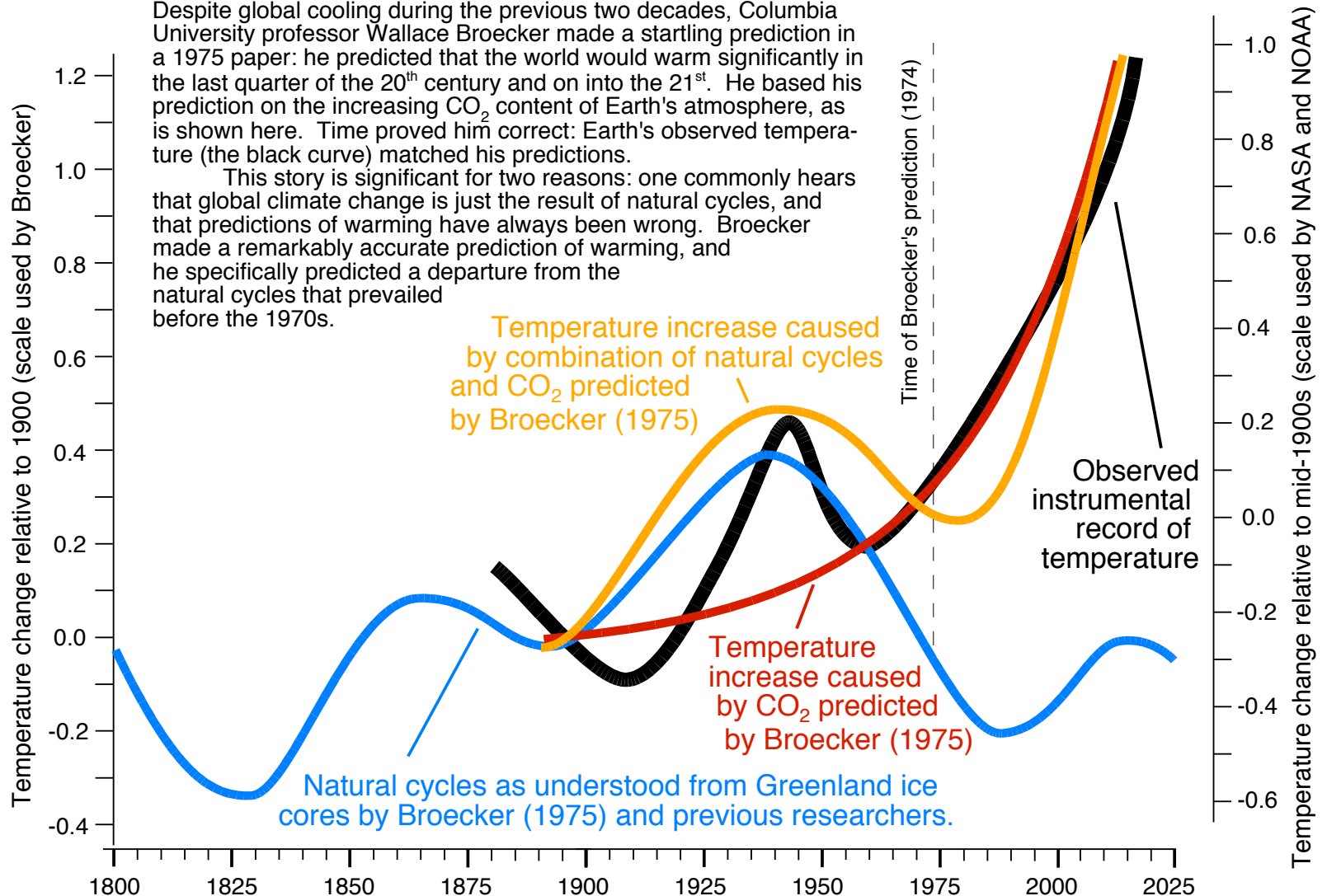


Wally Broecker's prediction of global warming when the world was cooling

Despite global cooling during the previous two decades, Columbia University professor Wallace Broecker made a startling prediction in a 1975 paper: he predicted that the world would warm significantly in the last quarter of the 20th century and on into the 21st. He based his prediction on the increasing CO₂ content of Earth's atmosphere, as is shown here. Time proved him correct: Earth's observed temperature (the black curve) matched his predictions.

This story is significant for two reasons: one commonly hears that global climate change is just the result of natural cycles, and that predictions of warming have always been wrong. Broecker made a remarkably accurate prediction of warming, and he specifically predicted a departure from the natural cycles that prevailed before the 1970s.



Broecker, W.S., 1975, Climatic change: are we on the brink of a pronounced global warming? *Science* v. 189, p. 460-463.